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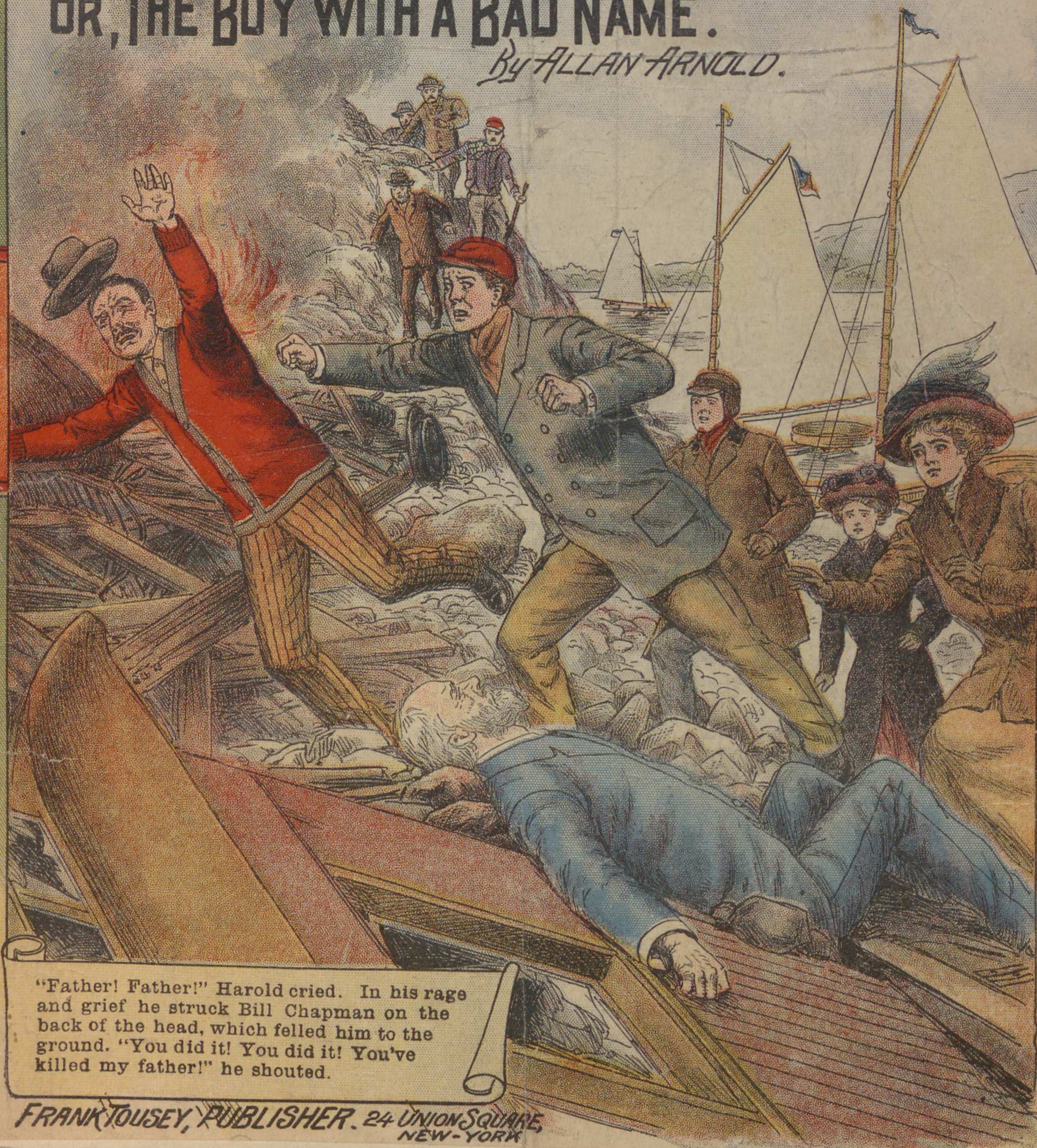
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PLUCK AND LUCK

HIS FATHER'S SON ;
OR, THE BOY WITH A BAD NAME.

By ALLAN ARNOLD.



"Father! Father!" Harold cried. In his rage and grief he struck Bill Chapman on the back of the head, which felled him to the ground. "You did it! You did it! You've killed my father!" he shouted.

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PLUCK AND LUCK

Stories of Adventure.

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HIS FATHER'S SON

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THE BOY WITH A BAD NAME

By ALLAN ARNOLD.

CHAPTER I.

HAROLD'S LEGACY.

"Ease up a little on the sheet, Dick," said Harold Holly.

"You'll take Kate's breath away if you run so fast."

"Not a bit of it!" cried Kate Walton, as the iceboat went flying down the river. "This is just glorious. You can't go too fast for us, can they, Mamie?"

Mamie Goodwin, who was holding on desperately, looked doubtful, but did not speak, for the rush of the iceboat had taken her breath away, and her courage with it, but Kate did not seem to mind it a bit.

Harold, who was doing the steering, now turned the boat a little toward the easterly shore of the river to avoid Brown's Point.

"Let her go for all she's worth, Harold!" cried Kate. "Don't you see Joe Terry's boat is picking up on us? We've got the lead, and if we don't keep it I declare I shall never speak to you again!"

"If Mamie can stand it," said Harold, "I guess the boat can take a little more of the sheet."

"She must stand it," cried Kate. "Here, I'll hold you, Mamie. There is positively no danger."

"All right. Let her go, Dick," said Harold.

Dick Johnson let out the sheet to its full capacity.

The wind filled the sail on the instant and the iceboat went flying down Pamaqua River at a speed well calculated to try the stoutest nerves.

Not a few of the Dillsburg people had come down to the Five Mile House to see the boats come in, and were now watching them in the distance from the broad piazza which overlooked the river.

There were six boats all told.

Harold Holly's boat, The Queen, named for his fair passenger, it was generally supposed among the Dillsburg boys, had already shown itself to be the flyer of the fleet, the only one able to compete with it being Joe Terry's Comet, which had now dropped considerably behind.

Iceboat sailing was a favorite sport up at Dillsburg, a flourishing town in the southern part of New York State, lying on the east bank of the Pamaqua, a considerable stream situated midway between the Hudson River and the Connecticut line.

Harold was captain of the iceboat club, and The Queen had

been built by his own hands, for Harold was a smart boy, and had a natural bent for mechanical work, although educated for business, having just completed a course in one of the leading commercial colleges in New York.

"If she don't win this race she shall never run another," he declared, when he helped pretty Kate Walton aboard the iceboat, so, very naturally, the girl was anxious that they should come in ahead.

But it was written in the book of fate that the race should never be finished.

Just as they rounded the point the afternoon train for Dillsburg, which was the last station on the branch, whistled in the distance.

"There comes the train," said Dick. "We'll give the passengers something to look at. We'll just about be abreast of them when they pass Quarry Hill."

"I expect father is on board that train," said Harold. "He sent me word that he would be home to-day, and I'm mighty glad of it, too."

Dick made no reply. Secretly he was thinking that there were many others in Dillsburg who would be glad of Mr. Holly's return, particularly if he came provided with plenty of cash.

The fact was, Harold's father had, of late, become decidedly unpopular, and yet he was by long odds the "big man" of the town. He was president of the Dillsburg National Bank, and it was rumored that it was on the verge of "bursting."

He was a heavy contractor, and just now building the new high school in Dillsburg. It was rumored that he had not paid his men in three weeks.

He was proprietor of the granite quarry toward which the iceboat was heading, and employed a considerable force there. Rumor had it that the quarry was mortgaged for all it was worth and was liable to be seized any day.

In short, Mr. Holly was a man who had too many irons in the fire, and now that winter had set in, and times were hard, and money scarce, it looked as though some of them were liable to get cold.

"When is your father going to have the high school done, Harold?" asked Kate as the boat stood in closer to the shore.

"He expects to finish about the first of May," replied Harold "but there may be some delay."

"Can he work just as well this cold weather?"

"Oh, yes. The building is all enclosed, and there will be no delay on account of the weather; but it's a big bother to suit the committee, for they are constantly making changes in the plans, which worries father terribly, for he is most anxious to get ahead with the work."

"There comes the train!" cried Kate.

"Look! They are just going to fire a blast there at Quarry Hill," said Dick. "See the men running! They must have a short fuse."

"They ought not to fire when a train is coming," said Harold anxiously. "The wall hangs right over the track, and is getting very thin. Father has told them over and over again to hold off when they see a train."

But the engineer rushed his train on, entirely regardless of danger.

Harold had scarcely spoken when the blast exploded with tremendous force, followed by a thundering crash.

Then the boys and girls on the iceboats were witnesses of a startling sight.

The whole side of Quarry Hill seemed suddenly to break away, and a vast mass of rocks and earth went tumbling down, spreading itself over the track.

A moment more and the locomotive lay a hissing wreck among the broken rocks on the track.

The baggage car and smoker telescoped and the first passenger car went down the bank, the rear car alone holding the rails.

An appalling disaster had taken place on the Dillsburg branch, for which Mr. Holly was indirectly responsible.

Poor Harold, realizing this, inwardly groaned as he drove The Queen ashore, followed by the other boats.

Harold's face was as white as chalk when he sprang from the iceboat the moment she was safely lodged against the bank.

Filled with a thousand fears he rushed along the shore toward the overturned car, closely followed by Dick and the girls.

The quarrymen had crowded around the car and were helping to pull the passengers out of the wreck, which had already taken fire and was burning briskly.

Four women and three men lay upon the snow, all more or less injured, when Harold came bounding up, and Bill Chapman, the foreman of the quarry, and Dan Price, the brakeman, who seemed to have escaped injury, were dragging a fourth man through the window of a burning car.

His face was terribly bruised and was bleeding freely. His head hung down, limp and motionless.

"Great heavens! It's the boss! He's dead!" gasped the foreman.

"Father! father!"

In his rage and grief he struck Bill Chapman a blow in the back of the head which felled him to the ground.

"You did it! You did it! You've killed my father!" he shouted.

He seized the dying man in his arms and pillowed his head upon his breast, calling to him in agonizing tones.

Perhaps it was this which brought Mr. Holly back to life for the moment. The eyes opened and fixed themselves with a glassy stare upon the boy's face.

"Good-by, Harold, good-by! It's all over. Be brave. I leave everything in your hands. Do the best you can, my boy."

This was the last.

Two prominent Dillsburg men who had escaped uninjured were standing near and overheard the dying man's last words.

"So he leaves everything in Harold's hands, does he?" remarked Mr. Mapes. "Say, judge, rather a poor legacy that."

"Harold is good for it," replied the judge. "He's a boy in a thousand, Mapes. Remember what I say."

"Humph!" growled Mapes. "So he may be, but who's going to pay the old man's debts? What has John Holly got to leave the boy but a bad name?"

CHAPTER II.

MR FLANAGAN WHISTLES.

"Harold, don't you be one bit discouraged. It will all come out right if you are only brave and stick to it and work with a will. Father says the committee will vote to let you continue the contract on the High School, and I believe you will be able to carry it right through to the end and finish it on time."

Tears came into Harold's eyes as Kate Walton spoke these encouraging words.

The fact was the boy was feeling deeply discouraged when he met Kate, and she had touched him on a tender spot.

"I declare you make me take heart," he said, pressing the girl's hand warmly. "Do you know, Kate, I was just on my way to the committee meeting, and I had about made up my mind not to ask them to let me take up the contract after all."

"Don't you do anything of the sort, Harold. Go right ahead boldly. Remember your father's last words."

"I know, Kate, but I've got a bad name. Father owed everybody. Since the funeral I've been bothered to death with people coming to the house for money. It's thousands of dollars, and I haven't got a cent; but if I could only finish the High School——"

"You'd have what, Harold?"

"I ought not to say, I suppose, but——"

"Whatever you say to me will go no further, be sure of that."

"I've been over the papers most carefully. There ought to be five thousand dollars left after all is paid."

"Strike for it, Harold. Be a man. I'll back you. Good-by."

And Kate hurried off up the street, leaving Harold to pursue his way to Judge Ramsey's office with a lighter heart.

Here he found the school committee awaiting him. Judge Ramsey shook hands heartily, Mr. Mapes nodded coldly, and so did several others, but Dr. Walton, Kate's father, clapped him on the back.

"Well, my boy, we've been considering your plan to continue the building contract, and we are perfectly willing to accept your proposition providing you can show us that you are able to carry it out."

"Is the committee in session? Am I expected to make my formal application now, doctor?" Harold asked.

His face was pale, but his manner was cool and determined.

All knew what the boy had been through during the two weeks just past, and all sympathized with him and were desirous of helping him along if they could, with the possible exception of Mr. Mapes.

"Yes, we are in session," replied Dr. Walton. "Go on, Harold."

Harold drew himself up, and taking a packet of papers from his pocket, removed the rubber band, and handed them to Judge Ramsey.

"Gentlemen," he said, "these are the written agreements of the lumber company which was furnishing my father with material at the High School, of the brick, hardware, molding and trim firms, and several others, guaranteeing to keep on furnishing supplies in their several lines providing this committee will continue the contract with me. While my poor father had a hard struggle during the last few years, and made many enemies, you see he also had some friends who had confidence in him, and have transferred that confidence to his son. Gentlemen, I do not pretend to be a practical builder, as my father was, but I have worked under him for

the past six months, and with the help of Mr. Murphy, the boss carpenter, I consider myself fully able to carry out the contract, if you will trust me. I only make one promise, and it is this: Advance me the next payment of three thousand dollars, which I am fully aware is not yet due, in order that I may square up with the men, who have not been paid in several weeks. As for the rest, I can manage. Major Willburn, of New York, my father's old friend, has agreed to buy our house, which, over and above the mortgage, will give me five thousand dollars clear. You know, gentlemen, that I am my father's only child, and my mother being dead, this money will be entirely at my disposal if it can be kept out of the reach of the creditors, which I propose to do by letting Major Willburn distribute it among the different material men who are furnishing on the High School, taking from me, as executor of my father's will, a lease of the house for ninety-nine years, with an option to purchase at a fixed price at any time. This, gentlemen, is my plan, and it is for you to approve or reject it, as you please."

"By gracious! That's a fine scheme!" said Mr. Mapes. "Harold, you are your father's son, for a fact. Perhaps you are not aware that the estate owes me a thousand dollars?"

"Yes, sir, I am aware of it," replied the boy, "but I think private interests ought to stand aside in a case like this. The High School is a public institution, and it is of great importance to Dillsburg that it be promptly finished. To change to a new contractor now will be certain to throw the work back, whereas, Mr. Murphy and I can go right straight on, carrying out the original plans, and have it done with the key in the door by the first of May."

"Well answered!" cried Judge Ramsey. "I think the scheme a very shrewd one. Whose idea was it, Harold?"

"Mine, sir."

"No one helped you?"

"No, sir."

"By jove! you ought to be a lawyer. Gentlemen, I'm in favor of this move."

"So am I," said Dr. Walton.

"I'm dead against it," said Mapes. "It's no part of this committee's business to aid in depriving John Holly's creditors of their just dues."

"They'll not be deprived of their just dues!" cried Harold, springing to his feet. "Every dollar my father owes shall be paid, and I'll pay it if it takes me the balance of my life!"

"Bravo!" cried the judge.

"Fine talk," growled Mapes. "You forget, boy, that you've got a bad name in this town, and you've got to live it down."

"Shame!" cried the doctor. "Mapes, I——"

"Question! question!" shouted the judge, rapping on the table as chairman of the committee.

So the question was put, and Harold triumphed.

The contract was indorsed over to him, and a check for three thousand dollars drawn on the Dillsburg Bank to cover the advance payment.

"Go in and win, my boy," said the judge, shaking Harold warmly by the hand as he left the office. "I'll back you against all your enemies in this town."

"It's a shame to cry down a smart boy like that," he added after the door had closed on Harold. "We ought to stand by him. He has grown up among us, he belongs to Dillsburg, and is entitled to every help and encouragement, even if his father did leave him a bad name."

Harold's heart was light as he hurried to the bank to get his check cashed.

"Hello, Harold! By gracious! You look as though you'd found a gold mine!" exclaimed Dick Johnson, happening to come out of Mapes' store just as Harold was about to enter the bank.

"I haven't done that, Dick, but I have got the contract on the High School."

"Hooray! I knew you'd win!"

"Hush! You'll attract attention. It's no sinecure, Dick. The men are on the verge of a big strike, and everything is in bad shape, yet I hope to be able to straighten matters out."

"You won't forget your promise, Harold?"

"To put you to work in case I got the contract, Dick? No, indeed, I won't."

"I must do something soon, Harold. You know mother has had a hard time of it since father's death, and if I only could be earning something——"

"Don't say a word, Dick. You shall have a job right now. Just wait till I go into the bank a moment, and I'll take you up to the High School and introduce you to Murphy, and see that he finds something for you to do."

The depot hack was standing in front of the bank as Harold entered, but as the boy had no possible means of knowing that Major Willburn, the rich New York speculator, had been its passenger up from the station, he was wholly surprised to run into that gentleman, who was just leaving the bank.

"Hello, Harold, my boy!" cried the major in his bluff, hearty way. "Hardly expected to meet you. Can't stop a second. I've got to make the twelve-twenty train. I just ran up to Dillsburg to have a look at the house. It's all right. Did you get that contract you were telling me about?"

"Yes, sir, I——"

"Good for you! Don't stop to tell me anything about it now, for I can't listen. Drop into the office day after to-morrow. Can you run down to the city then?"

"Certainly."

"Good! We'll talk it over then. By the way, I promised your father I'd open an account here, just to help the bank along with my name, which, if I'm going to be a resident of Dillsburg, I'm very willing to do. I suppose everything is all right with the bank, ain't it?"

"I—I suppose so," faltered Harold. "There are some things, though, I'd like to tell you, major, before you deposit."

"Bless your heart, boy, I've already clapped in two thousand dollars just to cover expenses of fixing up the place. Bank is good for that, ain't it?"

"Oh, yes, sir."

"All right, then. You can give me details later. So long!"

And Major Willburn rushed out of the bank, jumped into the hack, and was driven rapidly away.

"You're a pretty fellow, Harold Holly!" exclaimed Mr. Conklin, who was cashier, bookkeeper and teller all in one. "What do you mean by casting reflections on the bank to a stranger? Do you want to give it a bad name?"

Harold colored.

"He's no stranger to me," he replied. "He's my father's old friend, and——"

"He is, hey? Well, whatever the condition of this bank is, your father made it so."

"Don't you say anything against my father, Mr. Conklin. I won't stand that!"

"Then don't you say anything against the bank. Anyway, you don't know what you are talking about. Judge Ramsey has arranged to raise fifty thousand fresh capital next week. The bank is all right."

"Glad of it, I'm sure," said Harold, "and you needn't be afraid of me giving it a bad name."

"How do you want this—large or small?" demanded Mr. Conklin, after Harold had indorsed the check.

"I'll have to have small bills, Mr. Conklin. This goes to the workmen up at the High School."

"Oh, it does, eh? You've got your contract, I judge?"

"Yes."

"Humph! Hope you may be able to carry it out. Say,

Harold, I can't cash this for you small now, but I can about four o'clock, for I expect a lot of small bills up from New York by the three-thirty train."

"That will do, I suppose."

"Going to pay off the men to-day?"

"Yes."

"Well, tell 'em they can have their money at six o'clock. Meanwhile, I'll pass the check to your account. It's still open, you know."

Harold hurriedly left the bank, joining Dick on the sidewalk.

"By gracious! I thought you were never coming!" cried Dick. "What kept you so long?"

"Business."

"I suppose it will be all business and no fun with you now?"

"It will be hard work, you bet, Dick. I've resigned from the football team and the boat club and from the bicycle club, too. I've got no time for play now, old man. I've got to live down my bad name."

"Pshaw! You exaggerate that. Your name ain't any worse than any other fellow's."

"Ain't eh? Dick, you know better, and so do I. Strange if I didn't, when it's thrown in my face a dozen times a day here in Dillsburg that I am my father's son, and that all he left me was a bad name."

Dick did know better, and being fully aware that Harold spoke the truth, he said no more, but hurried by his side up to the High School.

The big building—it was a fine piece of architecture—was fully enclosed, and a large force of carpenters, plasterers and plumbers were working away inside.

Most of these mechanics were city men, brought up from New York by Mr. Holly, and only temporarily residing in Dillsburg; but there were others who had known Harold from boyhood, men who had always lived in the town.

Harold hurried up the broad steps with his heart filled with joy to think that at last the necessities of these poor workingmen were to be relieved, and that their slanderous tongues, which had been talking against his father for the past few weeks, would now be stilled.

He was just about to pull open the rough temporary door when it was suddenly pushed open from within, and Murphy, the foreman, came hurrying out, followed by a stout, flashily dressed man, wearing a huge diamond in his scarf.

"Here's the boss now!" cried Murphy. "This is Mr. Holly, who has just taken the contract to finish the job."

Evidently the news of Harold's triumph had preceded him, but the man with the big diamond did not seem to be at all impressed.

"Oh, so yer the feller, are yer?" he said sneeringly. "Yer your father's son. Say, my name's Flanagan. I'm walking delegate for the Plumbers' Union. I'm up from New York to see that these men get paid, or there'll be a strike on this here job. See?"

Harold could scarcely contain himself. Most certainly he would have flashed out some quick answer which would not have helped matters if Murphy had not given him a warning look.

"The plumbers will be paid to-day," he said, controlling himself as best he could.

"What time to-day?"

"Six o'clock."

"Not on your life! We don't wait till six o'clock. Promises cut no ice here. Where's the money coming from to pay with?"

"From the bank. Where do you suppose?"

"Go get it now, then, and pay them, or they quit work, and the rest go with them on a sympathetic strike. See?"

"I can get it at half-past four, if that will suit you better."

"'Twon't suit at all. It must be now. Yer father was a blamed shyster and a fraud, and as for you——"

"Hold on!" cried Harold. "Don't you dare! Get off these premises—quick!"

"Who says so?"

Mr. Flanagan thrust his ugly face close to Harold's, with his cigar elevated at an angle of forty-five degrees toward his nose.

"I say so!" said Harold sternly. "Go!"

He caught the walking delegate by both shoulders and thrust him back toward the steps. Perhaps he did not mean to hurt him, and perhaps there would have been no serious harm done if Mr. Flanagan had not lost his footing on the topmost step.

He lost his balance and rolled down the steps, never stopping until he had landed in the slushy snow at the foot.

"Ha! ha!" laughed Dick. But Murphy looked grave.

"There's going to be trouble, Harold, me boy," he said. "I wish ye hadn't done it, but I'll stand by yer till the last."

"They shan't run down my dead father!" cried Harold. "They can throw my bad name in my teeth all they please, but the other I can't and won't stand."

Before Murphy could reply the walking delegate had picked himself up. Shaking his fist at Harold, he took a small whistle from his vest pocket and blew shrilly three times.

"Now I've fixed yer, yer young whelp!" he cried. "Yer yer father's son—that's what ye are! The strike is on, and it won't come off until ye've paid the men the last dollar. Finish yer contract now, if yer can!"

It was a bad business surely.

Within three minutes the workmen came pouring out of the High School, tools in hand.

"We want our money!" they shouted as Harold held his place at the top of the steps, facing them bravely. "We don't work for no boy unless we are paid!"

CHAPTER III.

MR CONKLIN RUNS AWAY.

Every workman on the job had gone out with the strikers. Through it all Harold stood there at the top of the steps, and never said a word.

The flashy Mr. Flanagan, with his diamond pin flashing like the headlight of a locomotive, moved about among the men, clapping some on the back familiarly, talking to others, and distributing cigars right and left.

Instead of dispersing the men clustered about the foot of the steps.

"Hey, there, you young snoozer, come down here and pay these men, if you want the work on the school to go on!" shouted Flanagan. "As for what you did to me, I'll get square, and don't ye forget it, but that hain't got nothing to do with these honest workingmen."

Harold walked down the steps and boldly faced the angry crowd.

"Pay us our money!" they shouted. "We can't live on promises, same as your father gave us. We don't want to work for a boy with a bad name!"

"Men," said Harold coolly, "you all know me. I have never done you any wrong, and I don't intend to now. Why will you listen to this stranger, who has no more right to interfere with my business than I have to interfere with his?"

"Don't heed him, lads!" yelled Flanagan. "Don't let him humbug ye with his fine talk."

"I tell you now, as I told this man before he called you out, that I will pay you all at half-past four o'clock. All I ask is time to get the money and make up the payroll."

"Where would a boy like you get money enough to pay us all that's due, I'd like to know?" yelled a burly plumber.

"The money is already in the bank," answered Harold. "Do you suppose I carry my payroll around in my pocket?"

"That's sensible. Give him a chance, fellers!" cried one of the carpenters. "We'll meet him at the bank at half-past four."

This proposition seemed to find favor with the men, and they dispersed with loud shouts.

The two saloons down by the depot did a fine business that afternoon, and Harold heard afterward that the walking delegate threw his money right and left.

"This is a bad job," remarked Murphy, after the crowd had left. "There'll be a riot in front of the bank, Harold, if you don't pay prompt."

"Murphy, can't you do something to keep those fellows from coming to the bank?"

"Not now," was the reply. "It would be as much as my life is worth to try it, and, what's more, it wouldn't do any good. I tell you, Harold, there's more to this than appears on the face of it, so there is. It's a plot. Somebody is after this contract, and that somebody has hired that baste of a diligate to stir up the men."

"Come, Murphy," he said, after a few moments' silence, "at least you and I haven't struck, and here's Dick willing to work. My coat goes off now, and I shall work till four o'clock, which is the time of my appointment at the bank. I'm determined that I won't be turned from my course, no matter who tries to down me."

"Bully for you!" cried Murphy. "Sure, you are your father's son, and whatever they may say about the old man he had plenty of pluck. Come on inside. There's lots to be done to make things safe for the night, and we've got to look out that some hot-headed fool don't try to burn the building on us to-night."

Harold's heart sank at the suggestion, but he showed his despair by no outward sign. Off went his coat, and under Murphy's direction he and Dick worked steadily until a quarter to four, barring doors and windows, and securing every possible entrance to the building the best they could. Leaving Dick with Murphy to keep watch, Harold now hurried down to the bank. The clock on the Town Hall had just struck four as he reached it, and Harold knocked on the door, which he found locked, as he expected, for three o'clock was the closing hour of the bank.

Of course the boy knew this, but he understood Mr. Conklin to mean that he would especially accommodate him, and although the shades were pulled down and the door fastened, he never doubted that the cashier was inside and would open the door and let him in. But this was precisely what the cashier did not do.

No answer was returned to Harold's repeated knocking, and he began to grow very much concerned.

"Can he have forgotten all about it and gone home?" he pondered. "It must be so. There's only one thing to do, and that is to go to his house and bring him back before the strikers come."

Conklin was a bachelor, and boarded away over at the other end of town. Harold ran all the way, for he knew he would have as much as he could do to cover the distance there and back and be at the bank at half-past four.

As he dashed through the streets he passed more than one knot of the strikers. One party of four, all of whom seemed to be under the influence of liquor, tried to stop him, and would have succeeded if he had not pulled himself away, when they took their satisfaction in calling out unpleasant things about his father.

To Harold's despair, Mr. Conklin had not been home since morning, and the woman who kept the boarding-house had no idea where he was to be found. Losing not a moment, Harold now retraced his steps. His heart sank as he drew

near the bank, which faced the public square, for the open space was packed with people.

The strikers were all there, a wild, unruly mob, elbowing the townspeople who had mingled with the crowd. Mustering all his courage, Harold pushed his way among them. He was immediately surrounded.

"Pay us our money!" the strikers shouted.

"Let him alone! Let him get into the bank!" yelled others.

Then poor Harold was roughly handled. A dozen hands seized him, dragging him through the crowd, and almost tearing the coat off his back.

"Let him in!" they shouted, beating on the door. "Let him in! We want our money now!"

It was all Harold could do to keep his wits together. He dared not speak a word.

At last the door was opened a mere crack, and Mr. Mapes, with a white, frightened face, peered out.

"Oh, it's you, is it?" he whispered. "It's about time you came. I mistrusted this. So much for giving contracts to boys."

He opened the door wide enough for Harold to enter, shutting it in the face of the mob, hastily turning the key and shooting the bolts.

Harold stared in amazement. Mr. Conklin was not visible, but Judge Ramsey was there, and so was Dr. Walton, both of whom were directors of the bank.

The big safe stood open, and the floor in front of it was strewn with books and papers.

"What is this, judge?" gasped Harold. "Where is Mr. Conklin?"

"Gone!" replied the judge.

"Gone!"

"Yes, gone!" roared Mapes. "Are you deaf? Gone, and every dollar in the bank gone with him; but we've got you, thank goodness! What do you let this mob come here for? Why don't you pay them? Where's the money Conklin gave you on that check?"

"Money! He never gave me a dollar!" cried Harold, turning pale.

"You little liar!" roared Mapes. "You're your father's son, by thunder! The check is here, canceled and stamped paid. It's just as I told you, gentlemen, Harold Holly is in this steal!"

Bang! bang! bang!

A thunderous knocking on the door drowned Harold's excited reply.

"Pay us our money!" fifty voices shouted outside the bank. "We want our money now!"

CHAPTER IV.

KNOCKED OUT BY THE ARCHITECT.

"Yes," said Mr. Mapes, "it has come out just as I told you, gentlemen. Harold Holly is his father over again. It was the mistake of a lifetime putting the High School contract in the hands of this boy."

"Let the dead rest, Mr. Mapes," said Harold with quiet dignity. "You are not dealing with my father, but with his son, and I tell you to your face that when you say I had that money you simply lie!"

"Bravo, Harold!" cried Judge Ramsey. "Mapes, it's an outrageous shame that you should accuse this boy!"

"Of course it is," chimed in Dr. Walton. "Conklin has robbed the bank of every cent there was in it. Because he has charged that check to Harold's account is it any proof that the money was ever paid?"

"Certainly not!" cried the judge.

"Of course not!" cried the doctor.

Bang! bang! bang! thundered the strikers on the door

"Pay us our money!" they shouted. "We want our money now!"

"Well, you can say what you please, and believe what you like," growled Mapes, "but I stick to my original opinion. It ain't nice to be called a liar by a boy. I'll make you sweat for it, too, Harold Holly! Some other time, when——"

"Now! Now is a good time!" flashed Harold. "Begin right now!"

"No, no!" interposed the judge. "This has gone far enough. These men will break the door down, and it may go hard with all of us. Doctor, there is only one thing to be done. These men must be paid. The loan must be made good."

"I'll give half," said the doctor. "I trust Harold implicitly."

"And I'll give the other half," said the judge, "but in the meantime what is to be done?"

"You are making a mistake," said Mapes. "You are throwing your money away."

"When your opinion is wanted, Mapes, we'll ask for it," snapped the judge. "Harold, suggest something, my boy."

"Have you the money by you, gentlemen?" asked Harold quietly.

"I can get mine inside of ten minutes," said the judge.

"Give me time to go up to the house, and mine is ready," added the doctor.

"Then let us open the door and tell these men the truth. They are human beings; let us treat them as such. All they want is what's due them."

"He's right," said the doctor.

"Phew! I'd rather you'd face them than me," said the judge.

"I'll take my chances," replied Harold firmly. "Stand behind the railing, gentlemen, in case of a rush. Here goes!"

With wildly beating heart Harold threw open the door. He half expected to be struck down, but his face showed no fear. The strikers came pouring into the bank, calling out for their money. Harold was crowded against the counter.

In half a minute the floor space was packed to its utmost capacity, with those who could not gain admittance pushing and shouting outside.

Harold sprang upon the counter.

"Silence!" he cried. "Let me speak!"

"Go for him, boys! Pull him down out of that! Let's lick him! Let's take it out of his hide!" Walking Delegate Flanagan yelled from the doorway, for he was among those who had been unable to get into the bank.

"To the man who spoke then I don't owe a dollar!" cried Harold in a clear, ringing voice. "Those whom I do owe will be paid to the last cent. Gentlemen, the cashier of this bank has made off with the funds. Probably you have heard this, and that is why you are alarmed."

Cries of "We have! We know all about it! 'Tain't nothing to us! We want our money!"

"Which you shall have!" shouted Harold. "The town of Dillsburg is not engaged in swindling workmen. Your money is ready. We expected to find it in the bank, but as it is not here, give us time to get it elsewhere. Choose a committee to accompany Dr. Walton and Judge Ramsey to their homes, and they will advance this money. Get outside. Form a line. Give me time to make up the payroll, and every one of you shall be paid."

"Don't you trust him! Don't you believe him! He's fooling you again!" yelled Flanagan.

But better counsels prevailed.

"We'll do it, boss!" cried one of the carpenters, who was a power among the men. "Clear out of here, boys! Do as he says! Give him a chance!"

The tide had turned.

When Flanagan tried to put in his oar he was seized, and so roughly handled that he was glad to sneak away.

A committee of six was then chosen by the men, three to escort the judge and three for the doctor.

Harold descended from the counter, and without attempting to close the door calmly waited for their return; waited alone, for Mapes had pushed his way through the crowd as soon as the judge and the doctor left the bank.

When the money came, Harold, in the presence of the committee, put it in the pay envelopes, which he had already prepared. The men were formed in line, and each one was paid in full. There was no noise, no confusion.

Harold's triumph came when the last man had departed, and Judge Ramsey seized him by the hand.

"Nobly done, my boy!" he said. "You've shown what sort of stuff you are made of to-night. Keep right at it. If you get in a fix again, and want a friend, come to me."

"No, to me," said the doctor.

"To us both," laughed the judge.

"But the bank?" faltered Harold. "What's to be done?"

"Ah! That's a bad business," said the judge. "I fear your father's interest is valueless now, but it can't be helped. We are all in the same boat. Go on with the High School, Harold, and leave the bank to me."

Work began on the High School promptly at seven o'clock next morning. Harold was there, ready with a cheerful greeting for every one. It was a busy day. The men worked with an energy which they had not displayed in weeks.

Murphy was triumphant, and declared that never before had he been able to get so much work out of his men.

To Harold it seemed like the beginning of a new era. He had money enough left to carry the work on for two weeks, at the end of which time another payment would be reached.

On the second day matters went on just as swimmingly, and on the third it was the same. This was the day of Harold's appointment with Major Willburn. The young contractor came down to the building dressed in his best, all ready to take the ten o'clock train for New York.

"How is everything going, Murphy?" he asked the boss carpenter.

"I'm afraid there's more trouble, Master Harold," he said below his breath, "and it's mighty sorry I am for it, too."

"What's the matter now?" asked Harold. "I thought everything was going on all right."

"Oh, it ain't the men," said Murphy. "They're all right, sure; it's——"

Just then the door opened and Dick Johnson put his head out.

"He's coming!" he whispered in a frightened voice. "Look out, old man! Keep cool!"

The door closed, and Dick vanished.

"What in the world is the matter, Murphy?" asked Harold.

"It's the architect, boss," whispered Murphy mysteriously.

"Mr. Doric?"

"Yes, sir."

"Well, what of it? He was a great friend of my father's. I don't see what there is to be afraid of."

Harold laughed at the thought. He had often met Mr. Doric, and thought of him as a "very nice man."

"Sure, an' he's been here since seven o'clock, nosing and prying around," said Murphy. "I could tell you, but perhaps it's better that you should find out for yourself, for—— Oh, begorra! Here he comes!"

Murphy stopped abruptly as the door opened and the architect, fat, sleek and pompous, walked out.

"Good-morning, Mr. Doric," said Harold pleasantly.

"Ah! Good-morning! good morning, young man!" replied the architect. "So you've taken up this contract, have you? Well—er, don't you think—don't you think you'd have done just as well if you had consulted me first? I think I've got something to say about this building—at least that's my im-

pression. I—er—that is to say—er—may I speak with you alone?"

"Certainly," said Harold, wondering what was coming now. "Murphy, leave us, please. Now, Mr. Doric, let me say that I had no intention of ignoring you. I sent you a written notice that I intended to take up father's contract and carry it on. To-day I should have called on you, for I'm going to the city; but now that you are here——"

"Now I'm here let me say that things won't do as they are at all," broke in Doric. "Not at all, sir; not at all."

"What can you mean?" gasped Harold.

"What I say, sir! I condemn the plumbing entirely! It must be taken out and replaced according to the specifications."

"Mr. Doric——"

"Stop! Let me finish. The plastering in the west wing is not up to the mark. It is also condemned."

"But——"

"Wait. The roofing can't be passed. I called for the best I. C. charcoal tin; you have put on tern plate. It must be taken off at once."

"Do you want me to take down the building?" demanded Harold. "All that you speak of was done by my father under your direction. It will ruin me if I have to do what you ask."

"I know it," replied Doric coolly, looking Harold right in the eye.

"Do you want to ruin me?" faltered the boy, now very pale.

"No."

"But what——"

"Stop! You don't understand, and yet you ought to, for you are your father's son."

"Understand what, Mr. Doric?"

"My power, my influence with the committee. I've simply got to crook my little finger and this contract will be taken away from you."

"But what have you got against me, sir? Why should——"

"Pshaw, Harold! Don't be a fool! Your father was bright enough—what's the matter with you? What should I have against you, boy?"

"I'm entirely at a loss to understand you, Mr. Doric."

Mr. Doric buttoned up his coat determinedly. "Young man, remember one thing," he said. "You've got a bad name, and you might as well have the game. I can send your work on flying or I can stop it short. Which shall it be?"

Harold's eyes began to open. His face turned as red as the flashy scarf which Mr. Doric wore.

"Do you mean to intimate that I've got to pay you for passing the work, so that the next payment can be reached?" he asked.

"I mean to say that I don't do business for love, Harold. Good heavens! What do you expect? Your father was no such fool."

"I'll never bribe you nor any other live man!" cried Harold hotly. "I'll stand up for my rights! I'll——"

"Oh, you will, eh? Bribe, eh? Bribe, indeed! I want you to understand that no man ever bribed me. I order this work stopped. Make the changes according to my directions, or you will have to throw up the job. Good-day."

And off stalked the architect, leaving Harold with his brain all in a whirl. For stopped the work would have to be, and he knew it.

Unless the school committee saw fit to dismiss Mr. Doric, his will was supreme.

CHAPTER V.

WHO WILL HELP NOW?

"Harold, you're safe! I heard every word!" cried Dick Johnson as he came through the door.

"Dick!"

"Oh, yes, I know I had no business to listen, Harold, but it's a mighty lucky thing for you that I did. I'm your witness. Quick! Let's get down to Judge Ramsey's ahead of that scoundrel and tell our story. I understood the committee were to sit to-day."

"They were, Dick. I've no doubt they are in session now; but I've got to go to New York. I shall miss my train."

"Let it go, Harold. You don't want to see the work interrupted."

"No! no!"

"Then lose no time, or he will get the best of you."

"Dick, I'll take your advice. I—— But here comes Murphy."

"He's gone, has he?" exclaimed the foreman as he came hurrying up the steps.

"Yes."

"It's none of my business," said the boss carpenter, "but did you fix him?"

"Fix him? No. Murphy, I'll throw up the sponge altogether before I'll resort to bribery."

"Then, begorra, the sponge will have to go up, Master Harold," said the foreman emphatically. "Old Doric was always out for the stuff. If he don't get it he'll stop the work, sure."

"We'll see about that," said Harold, and he and Dick pushed past Murphy and hurried away.

When they reached Judge Ramsey's house they found that the judge had gone to New York, and that the committee meeting was being held at Mr. Mapes' store.

This meant considerable lost time, for the store was away down at the foot of Main Street. When they reached it the committee were just coming out, and Mr. Doric with them. Harold saw that Dr. Walton was not present. As he afterward ascertained, the doctor had gone to the city with the judge.

"Oh, here's Mr. Holly now," spoke up Mapes sneeringly. "Glad you came, young man. We were just going up to see you. Work will have to be stopped on the school."

"Mr. Mapes, may I explain——" began Harold.

"Not necessary. Mr. Doric has just told us how you tried to bribe him to let your father's shyster work pass muster. I'm not surprised—not at all. I opposed the contract being given to your father from the first, and as for you——"

"Will you let me speak?" cried Harold. "It's all false! I never tried to bribe that man. I——"

"I told you how it would be, gentlemen," broke in the architect. "I warned you that he would claim that I demanded a bribe to pass the work. I distinctly told you how it would turn out. I flatter myself that my reputation is sufficient to——"

"Certainly it is!" cried Mapes. "Holly, there's no use talking. The work has got to be made good, if it costs five thousand dollars. We've just passed a resolution to that effect. You'll have to give bonds in that amount for its performance. Until you can get the bonds the work stops. We give you forty-eight hours. If the bonds are not forthcoming in that time the contract is annulled."

Harold drew himself up to his full height. "Very good, sir," he said quietly. "I will see what I can do, but remember I will not give up without a struggle. My side of this matter shall be heard. Good-day."

He turned on his heel and walked away.

"He's his father over again," he heard Mapes remark. "I told you how it would be, gentlemen. They're a bad lot."

"Go and lick him, Harold!" flashed Dick. "By thunder! I'll stand by you. Go on!"

"Hush, Dick! Don't let us be fools! This thing is not finished yet."

"What do you propose to do?"

"First I'm going to give the bond; then I'm going to begin an action for slander against that scoundrel Doric."

"Phew! That won't do!"

"Why not?"

"Think of his influence. He's a man; you are only a boy."

"I'll show him who's the better man of the two, then. But I must have the bond, Dick. Once they get the contract away I'll never get it back again. I see how it is. Mapes has talked all the rest of the committee over, and lied to them about that check, no doubt."

"And you didn't have Dr. Walton and the judge to fight for you, Harold."

"That's it. But I don't want them to have to fight for me every day and every hour in the day. I'm going to show them that I can take care of myself, Dick. I'm going to get that bond; then I can talk, but not before."

"But who is there in this town to go bonds for you, except the doctor or the judge?"

"Nobody. I don't expect it. I'm going to Mr. Fortesque. He was my father's friend. They had many transactions together. I shall ask him."

"Why not go to Major Willburn? They say old Fortesque is as mean as mud."

"Because the major goes west to-morrow. In missing my appointment with him to-day I've missed it for two weeks."

"Aren't you going back to lay off the men first?"

"No; it isn't necessary. Doric and the committee will do that. See! They are heading for the school now!"

Within half an hour work was brought to a standstill on the new building, for the fiat of the architect had been issued, and his word was law.

Meanwhile Harold and Dick went down to the river. Here Harold kept his little sailboat, the Kate, so named in honor of the doctor's daughter.

It was but a small affair, and of no special value, but Harold had spent many happy hours on board the boat cruising up and down the Pamaqua with Dick.

They lost no time getting under way, and striking down the river, headed for the opposite bank, where stood the fine old mansion owned by Mr. Fortesque, one of the richest men in the vicinity.

Now Harold had no personal acquaintance with Mr. Fortesque, simply knowing him by sight, as did every one in Dillsburg; but as he had said, his father had known him well, and had always spoken of him in the highest terms, in spite of the rather unenviable reputation for closeness which he bore in the town.

"He'll never do it in the world," said Dick after they had hoisted the sail and had time to talk.

"Don't you be discouraging, Dick," said Harold. "Father always said that old Fortesque had a kind heart. I'm sure he'll listen to me. If he don't, then I don't know what I shall do, for I can't think of any other way."

"Say, Harold, there's the Firefly now. It's no use for us to go. In all probability he's on board."

Now the Firefly was a little pleasure steamer owned by Mr. Fortesque, in which he and his friends were in the habit of sailing up and down the river in season and out, for the old gentleman suffered from asthma, and had built the steamer on purpose to enable him to spend most of his time in the fresh air.

As Harold looked the boat was just coming around Ten Pound Island, above the "falls," as everybody called a stretch of dangerous rapids where the river went tumbling over some ugly rocks.

To go below the falls was impossible, and Harold fully expected to see the Firefly head upstream, instead of which it began acting in a most erratic manner, twisting and turning, and all the while drawing nearer the danger point, for once

caught in the rush above the rapids, nothing could keep it off the rocks.

"By gracious! They'll be in the soup in a minute, if they don't look sharp!" cried Dick.

"That's what the matter," echoed Harold. "What ails Mat Bellis? Is he drunk?"

Mat Bellis was the captain of the Firefly, and Harold knew that the crew consisted only of the engineer and a boy.

"That's just what's the matter with him!" cried Dick. "See! he's wobbling around there in the wheel-house at a terrible rate."

"There's Mr. Fortesque, and his daughter Rose is with him. Wonder if they realize what is going on?" Harold presently exclaimed.

"They must!"

"They do! Look! The old man is shaking his stick at Mat and calling to him! Dick, we are needed there!"

"As sure as you're born. You'll never get old Fortesque on your bond if you don't act quick."

"Hold hard, Dick! Here we go!"

Harold swung the Kate around and steered straight for the steamer. The wind caught the sail and they went flying.

"Mind what you are doing!" they heard the old gentleman roar as they drew near. "We'll be caught in the rapids in a moment. Do you want to drown me, you drunken fool?"

But Mat Bellis was evidently further gone than even his employer supposed.

All of a sudden he lurched forward, let go of the wheel, and dropped out of sight.

Pretty Rose Fortesque gave a terrified scream, for the Firefly immediately began to swing around, being already caught in the swift flowing water above the falls.

The old man staggered to his feet and shouted to the two boys on the Kate:

"Come aboard here and lend us a hand, for heaven's sake!" he cried. "My captain is dead drunk, and the engineer is not much better. I don't know any more about steering than a cat!"

"Throw us a line!" yelled Harold to the boy, who was running about the deck wildly. "Quick! quick!"

They were close upon the Firefly now, and in a highly dangerous situation themselves, but Harold cared little for that.

Indeed, it is only due to the boy to say that he thought just as little about gaining the rich man's favor. His only concern was to save the lives of those on board the Firefly, if he could.

The boy gave the line a toss, and Dick caught it. Another instant, and Harold went scrambling over the steamer's rail.

"Can you save us?" gasped Mr. Fortesque. "Oh, that drunken idiot! I could strangle him! Great heavens! We are caught in the rapids now!"

The rushing water had already seized the Firefly, and was whirling her stern foremost toward the rocks.

CHAPTER VI.

IN THE MIDNIGHT WATCH.

"Get inside there, and mind your bells!" shouted Harold as the engineer put his head through the door of the fireroom, calling out to know what the matter was.

Although the man had been drinking heavily, he still had sense enough to comprehend the danger, and returned to his post.

Meanwhile, Harold rushed into the pilot house. Pushing Mat Bellis aside with his foot, for the man lay stupidly drunk on the floor, he seized the wheel, and gave the starting bell.

It was nip and tuck for a few moments. At first it seemed as if the power of the engine was not sufficient to overcome the pull of the water.

Clinging to her father, Rose Fortescue watched the battle breathlessly.

"Keep at it, boy!" cried the old gentleman. "You'll fetch it! Save us, and name your own price! Anything! Anything in the world!"

"Keep alongside, Dick!" called Harold. "I've got her! It's all right now!"

Harold managed to strike diagonally across the rapids, as to have gone straight up the stream would have been impossible. In another moment they were in calm water. It was all plain sailing now.

"Thank heaven!" cried Mr. Fortescue in a tone of intense relief. "My boy, I owe you more than I can ever repay. Take us over to my pier. Probably you know where it is? Yes? Of course. Everybody knows me. My name is Fortescue. What's yours?"

"Harold Holly, sir."

"Holly! Son of John Holly of Dillsburg?"

"Yes, sir."

Mr. Fortescue's whole manner had suddenly changed. Not another word was spoken until they reached the little pier.

Here Dick and the boy made the steamer fast, and Harold came down from the pilot house and politely asked if there was anything further that he could do.

"Not a thing," replied the old gentleman shortly. "Of course, I'm a thousand times obliged to you, young man. How much do I owe you?"

"Nothing, sir."

"But you have saved my life and that of my daughter. If there is anything I can do for you don't hesitate to name it. Speak out."

"The fact is, sir," he said, "I was on my way to see you to ask a great favor. I always understood from my father that you were his friend, and——"

"Friend! No, sir," interrupted Mr. Fortescue. "On your own account I am not prepared to say that I would not grant your favor, seeing that you have put me under obligations to you, but not on your father's account. No! no! Don't ask it. Your father swindled me out of twenty thousand dollars, and you——"

"And I am my father's son, Mr. Fortescue," broke in Harold, drawing himself up proudly. "I have no favor to ask of you, sir. Good-day!"

Tears were in the boy's eyes as he turned and jumped down into the Kate.

"Let her go, Dick!" he cried. "We are through here."

"Stay!" called Mr. Fortescue. "Don't get rusty. If you've got any request to make of me, make it."

"Father! For shame!" cried Rose, and she turned her head away.

"I don't care. His father was a thief and a swindler!" Harold heard the old man exclaim as the Kate filled away.

"It's no use, Dick," he said, once they were well out in the river. "I might as well give up. I get it on all sides. Whatever I am myself counts for nothing. It seems to be enough that I am my father's son."

"Not a bit of it!" cried Dick. "Cheer up, Harold. Don't you give them the satisfaction of downing you—don't you do it, old man."

"Dick, I won't! By gracious! I'll make them respect me yet. There, it's over now. It was all a mistake coming to this man, anyhow, but I'm glad of it just the same."

"Of course," replied Dick. "They'd have been drowned, like enough, if we hadn't come. Mean old hunks! But the girl was confoundedly pretty, just the same."

When Harold got back to town he went directly to the school building. As he had expected, the building was deserted. Even the watchman had gone, and Murphy, whom he had fully expected to find there, was nowhere to be seen.

"They've all cleared out," said Dick. "Who's going to watch here to-night, Harold?"

"You and I, I expect, Dick. I won't go after them. Murphy might have stood by me at all events. Meet me here at eight o'clock, if you will. Meanwhile, I'm going home to think."

"You bet I will," replied Dick. "I'll stick to you to the last gasp, Harold. You can't shake me if you try."

Faithful Dick! If ever a boy had a true friend, Harold had one in him.

Promptly at eight o'clock the boys met at the building. Somebody had to watch, and as the regular man did not appear, Harold and Dick went inside, and closing the door prepared to make a night of it, for there seemed no other way, since Harold was determined not to ask for help from any of the workmen.

The hours dragged slowly by. Midnight came at last. A dozen times the boys had made the rounds of the unfinished rooms, and now they started again.

"Do you know what I mean to do?" said Harold. "I've been thinking about it all the afternoon, and I was a fool not to have thought of it before. There are companies in New York who go bonds for men of all sorts—cashiers, bank tellers, and others. I'm going to one of them. I'll tell 'em the whole story, and pay whatever they ask. I'll bet you what you like I'll get my bonds."

"Good!" cried Dick. "Good idea! I believe it will work."

"I'll try it anyhow. I won't be downed. I'll show Mapes and the rest what sort of stuff I'm made of, and—— Hush! What's that?"

"Some one trying to get in through the window," whispered Dick.

"Quick—put out the light!"

The light was no more than extinguished when a man came climbing through the east window of the big classroom in which the boys stood.

It was too dark to distinguish his face as he stood peering about.

Suddenly they heard a match snap, and saw the man bend down to the floor, which was covered with shavings and bits of wood.

"Hold on there! What are you about?" shouted Harold, rushing toward him.

The man made one bound for the window, but it was too late to prevent his diabolical work. Suddenly there was a burst of flame from the pile of shavings into which he had dropped the match.

They rushed for the window, but the firebug made a leap through it and was gone.

"Go for him, Dick! Go for him!" cried Harold. "I'll stamp the fire out!"

Easier said than done. Dick sprang through the window and was gone in an instant. But the shavings were already burning briskly, and Harold's efforts only scattered them, and others caught.

In a moment there was a blaze in a dozen places.

"I'm done for!" gasped Harold.

CHAPTER VII.

HAROLD ON HIS FEET AGAIN.

"Harold! Harold! Look here!"

When Harold Holly looked out of the window of the recitation-room there stood Dick Johnson calling to him.

"Got him, Dick?"

"Yes and no. Something else has got him. Is the fire out?"

"Thank goodness, it is, and a tough time I've had of it. Look out! I'm coming down."

Harold jumped out of the window, landing beside Dick.

By almost superhuman efforts the boy had managed to stamp out the last of the burning shavings. No damage be-

yond a few charred floor planks had resulted, but Harold was terribly excited. Now, more than ever, it seemed as though everybody in Dillsburg was against him.

Dick caught him by the arm and pointed to an open cesspool vault, not ten feet away, which had recently been dug and the sides stoned up, but the top had not yet been covered over, as it should have been.

"He's down there, Harold!" whispered Dick. "He tumbled in!"

"Great Scott! You don't say so! I told Murphy to cover that place. I warned him that some one would fall in."

"Well, that firebug fell into it. He's groaning fearfully. I expect his leg is broken.

Harold ran to the edge of the cesspool and peered down.

"Hello, there!" he called. "Are you hurt?"

"Yes! yes! Get me out of here, for goodness' sake! My arm is broke! Say, get me out, and I'll give the whole snap away."

"Don't do it," whispered Dick. "Let me go for Captain Crane, the constable."

"No," said Harold. "I ain't afraid of him. Get down in the cellar, Dick, and fetch me that fall and a lantern."

"But he may be shamming."

"We'll see. I ain't afraid. Whatever we do, we want to keep this thing dark, for it will only put it into some one else's head to try to burn down the High School if it gets talked about, and the next one may succeed."

Dick soon returned with the fall and the lantern. Harold flashed the light down into the cesspool.

"Well, I declare!" he exclaimed. "Duchy Moore, the man my father kept for two whole years!"

The firebug, who was standing against the stones, with his arm hanging limply at his side, turned his head away, as if ashamed to look the son of his benefactor in the face.

"You'll help me out, Harold, won't you?" he whined. "I was hired to do this job. You might know I wouldn't do it of my own accord."

"Who hired you?"

"Say, I—I don't want to tell."

"You miserable drunken loafer! Then stay there! Dick, go for Captain Crane!"

"No! no! Hold up, Harold!" called the man. "I'll give the snap away if you'll help me out."

"I ought not to make any bargain with you," said Harold, "but I'm going to help you out anyhow. Can you hold on to a rope if I let it down?"

"I don't think so."

"All right. I'll come down to you, then, and tie the rope under your arms."

"Don't you do it," said Dick. "First you know, he'll stick a knife into you."

But Harold, without a moment's hesitation, dropped into the cesspool, called for the rope, and fastened it as he had proposed. Then Dick, who was as strong as a horse, easily drew the fellow up. Harold climbed up without any trouble.

"That's all," he said. "Duchy Moore, you can go. I don't ask any odds of you. Go on—go now!"

"Don't you want to know who hired me?" asked the firebug in a low tone.

"Just as you like."

"Harold, you're a Christian. I—I wish I hadn't done this job."

"And why did you do it? Why should you want to ruin me when I am in deep trouble, as you must know?"

"I—I was crazy, Harold. I wasn't myself. Great heavens! I've been paid off for it. My arm is broken in two places, I think."

"You'd better go to Dr. Walton and have it set, then. Tell

him to charge the bill to me. Tell him how it happened, and that you tried to burn down the school building."

"By heaven, I'll go and drown myself before I'll do that, Harold. Say, I'm done. You needn't fear me any more. Mapes hired me to do this job!"

"What!" cried Harold, almost dropping the lantern.

"Yes, it was Mapes. He gave me ten dollars, now that's straight. Say, Harold, I'll do anything I can to make up for this."

"Go on and say nothing—that's the greatest favor you can do me," said Harold.

And he turned away and re-entered the school, leaving Dick to follow him, and Duchy Moore to take himself off.

"Harold!" called the fellow under the window. "Say, Harold! Just one word!"

"Tell him to go to thunder, Dick," said Harold. "If there was one man in Dillsburg who I believed would stand up for my father's memory it was Duchy Moore. I never want to see him again."

"Harold! Say, Harold! I must speak to you!" came the call again.

Pushing Dick aside, Harold looked out of the window. "Go on!" he said. "Don't you ever dare to speak to me again, or——"

"Hold up, Harold! I must say a word—I will! Mapes knows something what you ought to know; if I knowed what it was I'd tell you. Watch him, Harold, and I'll watch him, too. You've called me down—away down into the sub-cellar. I shan't forget this."

And having thus delivered himself of what was burdening his mind, Duchy Moore hurried away.

Next day Harold's first care was to engage four competent men to watch the building, two by day and two at night.

This done, he started one more for the depot, intending to go to New York and see what could be done in the matter of the bonds. As he passed the bank Judge Ramsey came hurriedly out and called him.

"Can't stop now, judge," answered Harold. "I'm off for the train."

"But you must. Come right in. You don't want to go to New York to-day."

Harold paused.

"Probably you haven't heard what happened yesterday," he said. "I'm afraid I'm about used up, judge. Still, I'm going to fight to the last, and——"

"Pshaw! Why didn't you come to me last night? I've heard it all. Don't you fret. Walton and I have been watching Mr. Doric for some time past. So he wanted to be bought, did he? The scoundrel! His day is over. Just you wait and see."

The judge had Harold by the arm now, and there was no help for him. He was dragged into the bank and found to his surprise, that the school committee were all there in full session.

Mapes glared at him. Dr. Walton smiled encouragingly. As for the others, some looked grave and some glum, and the glummost of all was Mr. Plankman, the contractor, who had been his father's principal rival in town.

"Gentlemen," called out Judge Ramsey, resting his hand on Harold's shoulder, "fair play is a jewel, they say. I've been listening to your talk here, and have kept silent until now. The motion to take away the High School contract from Mr. Holly and give it to Brother Plankman here, seems to me entirely out of order. As I understand the situation, forty-eight hours were given Mr. Holly to produce bonds. By what right, then, is this meeting called? By what right do you propose to change your action of yesterday without notifying this young man?"

Harold's eyes flashed fire as Judge Ramsey paused.

"That was the understanding," he broke out. "I'm working for those bonds, and I propose to get them. The charges made against me by the architect are false. I never tried to bribe him. He tried——"

"Stop!" broke in Mapes. "There's nothing in this. You can't get anybody to go bonds for you. Your name is too well known. Who'll trust John Holly's son? The school must be finished. We've got to protect ourselves."

It was all that Harold could do to restrain himself. Angry words were on his lips. In a second he would have blurted out the disgraceful story of the night before if Judge Ramsey had not whispered to him to be still.

"Mr. Doric is an architect of the highest character," continued Mapes. "It is perfectly plain that he can never work in harmony with our present contractor. I move you, gentlemen, that the resolution of yesterday be rescinded, and the contract turned over to Mr. Plankman. Mr. Doric——"

"Enough!" broke in the judge. "Gentlemen, Mr. Doric was arrested last night in New York for fraud in connection with the building of the new jail at Martintown. He is charged with having conspired with the contractor to swindle the State by admitting the cheapest kind of materials on the work. Dr. Walton and I have long suspected him. We hold positive proof of his guilt. Gentlemen, I move you that Mr. Doric be dismissed as our architect, and another chosen. As for Mr. Holly, here are the bonds, signed, sealed, and now delivered. I think you can hardly question their value, for the surety is worth more than a million. He is our neighbor, Mr. Fortescue. Gentlemen, let us be honest. Let us live up to our contract with Mr. Holly, even if he is his father's son."

CHAPTER VIII.

THE MAN IN THE BOAT.

Harold left the bank with his brain all in a whirl. He had been allowed to speak at last, to tell the story of Mr. Doric's infamous proposal, and, better than all, the story had been believed.

Even Mapes was silenced when the committee passed a resolution securing Harold in the contract, and everybody came crowding around him, eager to shake hands and say an encouraging word, but the mystery of the bonds was still unexplained.

"How in the world did you get them?" Harold asked the judge when they found themselves alone on the street.

"Why, it's simple enough," replied the judge. "Mr. Fortescue called at my house late last evening and made inquiry about you. Said you asked him to go on your bond, and he was willing to do it if I said it was all right."

"But I never asked him!" cried Harold, and then he told the judge the whole story.

"That scores one for you," said the judge. "Fortescue probably inquired into the matter, and guessed what your request would have been. In spite of the bad name people have given you he determined to grant it. Don't go near him, Harold. He's a peculiar man. Just work on. Show him that his trust in you has not been misplaced. Prove that you can do what you have undertaken, in spite of the fact that you are your father's son."

After this, for more than three weeks, Harold Holly had a quiet time of it. To be sure, there was an undercurrent of feeling against him which would crop out now and then.

He heard rumors that he was about to fail; that the material men were going to jump on him and wipe him out; that his father's creditors had discovered evidence that he had secreted a large sum of money, and were going to have him arrested for fraud; that—but of what use to go over the whole list?

Let us mention the worst rumor of all—and it was one which had not yet come to Harold's ears—that he knew where

Mr. Conklin was hiding, and had divided the bank funds with him, which accounted for his being able to go on with the High School contract and his possession of ready cash.

This story passed from mouth to mouth until people began to believe it.

Work on the school was progressing finely. A new architect had been appointed, who promptly pronounced the plumbing roofing, etc., in good condition, and entirely up to the specifications.

Major Willburn returned from the West, and in spite of the fact that he had lost two thousand dollars in the Dillsburg bank he advanced Harold the money he had promised, and the more pressing material bills were paid.

This helped Harold's credit, but it hurt him in the town, for it gave color to the slanderous reports about the bank affair.

People began to give the boy the cold shoulder more and more. Old friends passed him on the street and turned their heads away. His local credit was ruined. Harold could not buy a pound of nails unless he paid cash.

Harold left the High School about five o'clock on a certain afternoon and went down to the post office to get his mail. Among the pile of letters, bills and statements, which was unusually large that evening, was the following brief note:

"Mr. Holly.

"Dear Sir: Please call at my house. I want to see you.

Yours,

"TITUS FORTESCUE

It was the first intimation Harold had ever had that the rich man on the other side of the Pamaqua remembered his existence since the affair of the bonds.

This courtesy Harold promptly acknowledged in a polite letter, but as he never received any answer he came to the conclusion that Mr. Fortescue did not care for his acquaintance.

The note just received seemed to indicate that the contrary was the case. Harold thrust it into his pocket and went out of the office hurriedly. At his heels went two men who had followed him in, and whom he had seen close behind him when he walked down from the school.

"Why do those fellows hang so close to me?" he asked himself. He halted to let them go by, which they did without glancing at him, and Harold was just about to move on toward his room when Jennie Hilton and Mamie Goodwin came out of Madam Kanard's millinery store.

Off went Harold's hat. These girls were his old school-mates; he had known them all his life; but now they stared at him for an instant, then turned their heads away, and sailed past as though they had never seen him before in all their lives.

Harold flushed hotly. "Has it come to this?" he thought, as he moved on. "What has got into everybody the last week or two? It was bad enough before, dear knows, but now—hello, Joe! How are you, old man? Haven't seen you in a month of Sundays. I——"

"Holly, I don't know you any more, and I don't want to know you. Don't address me on the street again, if you please."

So spoke Joe Terry, one of Harold's oldest friends. It took the poor boy all aback.

"What's the matter, Terry?" he faltered. "What have I ever done to you?"

"Oh, don't bother me! I've got no time to talk!" was the rude reply, and Joe Terry pushed past him and hurried away.

"This is getting to be too much," thought poor Harold, as he walked off. "They'll force me out of Dillsburg if this keeps on."

He looked back to see if Joe was looking. He could not

help it, and he was ashamed of himself for doing so. Joe Terry was not looking. He was half way to the corner by this time. But to Harold's amazement he saw the two men who had pushed ahead of him now behind.

"What does this mean?" he thought. "Are they detectives? Are they shadowing me? Great heavens! It looks that way!"

He determined to prove it. Hastily turning into Flood's alley, he ran with all his speed through to Main Street, and then walked rapidly on toward the river.

A moment later he looked back, and there were the two men walking behind him.

Again Harold dodged, passing through Brown's coal yard, and so on out to Main street again. This time he seemed to have given the men the slip, for after ten minutes they were nowhere visible.

Harold had now reached the wharf alongside of which he kept the Kate.

"I may as well run over and see Mr. Fortescue now," he thought. "We'll see if I'm to be followed across the river."

It was dark by this time, but not too dark for the boy to make out what he took to be a pile of old clothes lying in the bottom of the boat when he glanced down from the wharf.

"Who in the world ever threw that trash into my boat?" he thought.

Then he climbed down and boarded the Kate. As his feet touched the boat a man clothed in ragged garments suddenly rose up before him.

"Harold! Don't you know me, he breathed. "I've been waiting for you for hours. I thought you would never come."

CHAPTER IX.

HAROLD GETS HIMSELF INTO JAIL.

"Mr. Conklin!"

He was sadly changed, as Harold could readily see, for just then the electric light at the end of the coal dock flashed up, striking full upon the Kate. His face was red and swollen, his clothes were in rags, and his whole appearance dirty and unkempt to a degree. He looked like a man who had been on a hard spree, and his whole manner bore this out, for he trembled from head to foot, his teeth fairly chattering as he spoke.

"I s'pose you haven't got a drop of whisky about you?" he stammered. "If you have, it would be an act of charity to give me a drink."

"I never use the stuff," replied Harold. "But I should say you had enough of it, if looks go for anything, to last you for some time to come."

"Then you'd say right. For the last two weeks I've lived on nothing else. Harold, I—I'm a—goner. I—I—have—I—oh, dear! What shall I do?"

He burst into tears. It was pitiable to hear his sobs.

Harold could not help being sorry for the man, wretch though he knew him to be.

"Don't do that," he said gently, putting his hand on the cashier's arm. "If I can help you, Mr. Conklin, I shall be only too glad to do it. I know what it is to have trouble—to have a bad name."

"You can help me a great deal," said Conklin hoarsely. "Stand out on the river, Harold. Head for Ten Pound Island. Don't speak to me for a while. Give me a chance."

It was not in Harold's generous nature to refuse any man a chance, no matter what his past might have been. So he ran up the sail in silence and stood across the river. Why should he not? It was right in his way. As to attempting to hold Conklin and deliver him up to the authorities, he felt that he could not do it, but he never dreamed of any

harm coming to himself for not doing it, as he might have done if he had looked back toward the coal dock.

For there on the end of the dock stood the two men, and another with them. For an instant they were visible and then the two vanished. The third stood alone on the wharf, looking out on the river, but his face was in the shadow, and even if Harold had looked he would not have been able to recognize Mr. Mapes.

But he might have seen a small sailboat come around the end of the wharf and head down the river. He did see it later, but never dreamed of it meaning anything to him.

Not until they were almost at the island did the cashier break the silence. "Harold!" he whispered. "Harold!"

"Well?"

"What are you going to do with me?"

"I am doing what you asked, Mr. Conklin."

"I mean afterward."

"After what?"

"After I give you the money."

"You said nothing about any money."

"Yes! yes! I told you! I—I hid a lot of the money I stole from the bank on Ten Pound Island. It's the biggest part of it, Harold. I told you I'd give it to you. It's a curse. It has ruined me. I—I think I'm crazy. I'm going to kill myself, Harold, and if you attempt to interfere with me, boy, I shall kill you!"

Out came a long, wicked knife. The cashier's eyes glittered as he flourished it before Harold's face.

"I'll do anything you say," he replied quietly. "I've got nothing against you."

"Then pull in here at Kettle Cove!" hissed the wretched man, for they now were close to Ten Pound Island. "Pull right in, and let me land. Don't follow me. If you do I'll knife you! If you don't I'll bring you back the biggest part of the bank money. As for the rest—but what am I saying? Mind, now, Harold, don't you dare to leave the boat!"

Conklin leaped ashore and plunged into the thicket. Filled with a thousand strange thoughts, Harold sat still, awaiting his return.

Where another, from curiosity, might have followed, Harold yielded to the cashier's whim, fearing to spoil all if he did otherwise.

"It will be a big thing if I can bring the bank's stolen money back to Dillsburg," he thought. "That will open people's eyes. When they learn that through me their losses have been made good they'll forget that I am my father's son."

He waited so long that he at last began to wonder if after all he had not been a fool, and was just about to give it up and go in search of the cashier, when all at once the bushes parted, and out he sprang.

"Quick, Harold! Take it! Here's your share!" he exclaimed, extending a flat package, done up in strong wrapping paper, toward the boy.

Harold, standing up in the boat, reached out his hand to receive it. But before he could grasp it two men suddenly leaped out from the bushes into full view.

One flashed a lantern upon Harold and the cashier; the other thrust out both hands, a revolver in each.

"Drop it, boys!" he shouted. "Drop it, for we are detectives, and have got the drop on you!"

They were the two men who had tracked Harold through the streets of Dillsburg. He knew them at a glance. With one wild cry, Mr. Conklin flung the package at Harold's head. "This is your treacherous work!" he shouted. "Burn you, Harold Holly! You are your father over again! Here goes for nowhere! Good-by!"

He sprang into the river and vanished.

"Save him! He's mad!" cried Harold. "I am innocent. I

have never seen this man since the night he robbed the bank until now."

"Oh, we know all about that," said the man with the revolvers, throwing himself upon Harold and snapping a pair of handcuffs about the boy's wrists. "Get the boat, Mulvey. Catch the other one if you can, but I'll hold on to the boy."

Harold struck out wildly, kicked, struggled, protested his innocence, but all in vain.

Mulvey only laughed as he picked up the package. Nor did he laugh without reason. He had gained his point. He could afford to laugh. That night Harold slept in Dillsburg jail.

CHAPTER X.

DETECTIVE MULVEY'S LITTLE GAME.

Harold Holly remained a prisoner in the Dillsburg jail two whole days, and never saw a soul except the keeper, who brought him his meals. Nor was he allowed to communicate with any one. But on the third day the situation changed. Early in the morning the cell door was suddenly thrown open, and in walked Detective Mulvey.

"Good-morning, young fellow," he said familiarly. "How are you feeling? Getting kind of tired of this solitary confinement business, I suppose. Here, try a cigar."

"I don't want your cigar, sir," replied Harold, looking him squarely in the eye. "If you want to be friendly with me there's just one way for you to show it—one only, mind you—no other—that's all."

"Hello! You're all business, ain't you? Say, I hain't got nothin' ag'in you personally. Why should I? Hain't I doing this sort of thing all the time? Now, then, you've had your taste of the solitary, let me tell you what you do. Confess this here job, and I'll promise you that you shall be let off easy. Tell us where you think we can find Conklin, if he's still living, and I'll use my pull to get you the chance to turn State's evidence and get free."

Harold was furious, but he controlled himself as he said: "I've said all I've got to say."

"Don't be a fool, young fellow."

No answer.

"We've got you dead to rights, me and my partner. We can railroad you to Sing Sing, or we can set you free if you'll tell where the balance of the boodle is hid. See?"

Still no answer.

Mulvey began to fidget.

"Obstinate, eh? Say, 'twon't do you no good—not a blame bit; but I'll humor you. What is the way?"

"Send my friends to me!" burst out Harold. "Let Judge Ramsey or Dr. Walton come here. Then I'll talk."

"Not much. I've got an order from the sheriff to handle this case; no one can see you till you've confessed."

"What do you mean? Is this Russia? Can't an accused man even see his lawyer? I've heard of this kind of business before, Mr. What's-your-name. You expect to wear me out and make me confess to a crime which I never committed. Try it. I'll stay here forever before I'll talk to you."

"We'll see about that," sneered the detective. "Innocent, eh? Well, so you are, I don't think. Weren't you caught redhanded? Didn't me and my partner hear Conklin say to you, 'here's your share?' No, no. The innocent dodge won't go down, and the friends you want to see are your friends no longer. Why, the whole town is talking about you. You seem to forget that you have a bad name."

"I'm done," said Harold quietly.

And after that, although the detective kept it up for nearly twenty minutes, he refused to utter a word.

Then Mulvey gave it up and went away.

For nearly an hour Harold paced the floor in an agony of mind better imagined than described. At the end of that time the cell door was opened again and the keeper put in his head.

"There's a lady to see you, Mr. Holly," he said. "Shall I show her in?"

"Kate Walton," thought Harold.

But it wasn't. It was pretty Rose Fortescue who was presently ushered into his cell.

Harold threw up his hands in amazement. "Miss Fortescue!" he exclaimed. "You! I—I——"

"Don't distress yourself, Mr. Holly. Please don't," said the girl, taking his hand. "It is not necessary for you to say anything. You are here, I know why, and I have come to say that father and I both believe you innocent. I came yesterday and the day before, but they wouldn't let me in."

Harold sank down upon the side of his cot and for a moment buried his face in his hands and gave way to tears.

Rose remained silent. If he had looked at her face he would have seen that she was equally moved.

Suddenly Harold raised his head and drew himself up proudly.

"Miss Fortescue, I shall never forget this," he said. "I am innocent. This whole affair is the result of the merest accident. Let me explain."

"Perhaps you had better not, Mr. Holly. I came to say that——"

"But I must—I will—before you say a word." And he did.

In simple, earnest words, Harold told the story. Detective Mulvey, who was in the next cell, with his ear glued to a gimlet hole in the partition, smiled sarcastically to himself.

"He's a good one," he thought. "Wonder how long it took him to concoct that yarn? I must act quick, or old Fortescue will have him out on bail, for I can't stave off matters longer than to-day. I'll try the last resort."

He was still listening as these thoughts flashed through his mind.

"Mr. Holly, father will not desert you," he heard Rose say. "It is only right that you should know that everybody in Dillsburg believes you guilty, but that will make no difference. To-morrow you will be brought up for examination before Judge Ramsey, and father will be on hand to go bail for you, no matter what the amount may be. He may be rough, but his heart is in the right place. We don't forget that you saved our lives. If there is anything, in the meantime, that I can do for you, I——"

"Time's up!" called the keeper, suddenly opening the door.

So all that Harold could do was to say good-by, and Rose left the cell.

The day wore on, and night settled down upon the gloomy jail. Harold had eaten his supper, and was just preparing to stretch himself upon the cot when the cell door was suddenly opened and a man came stumbling in.

"Hello, Harold," he said familiarly. "How are yer? They say I've got to bunk in with you to-night."

Slam went the door behind the fellow.

Harold drew away in disgust, for by the faint light which still stole in through the cell window he recognized the features of Mr. Duchy Moore.

The firebug burst into a coarse laugh and extended his left hand, his right being in a sling.

"What's the matter? You don't seem glad to see me," he chuckled. "If I am the town drunkard, I'm as good as the bank robber any day in the week!"

"Stand back! Don't come near me!" Harold burst out. "This is shameful! I won't stand it! I'll pound the door down, but I'll bring some one. They shall take you away."

He sprang to the door and beat against the iron with his clenched fists. But only for an instant. Duchy Moore thrust his head over Harold's shoulder and whispered softly: "Go slow, Harold! Go slow! I'm your friend—perhaps the only one you've got in Dillsburg. Every word you say is over-

heard. They've put me in here to pump you and make you confess, but I'll give you a pointer which will square you with your enemies. Trust me."

CHAPTER XI.

THE LAST STRAW.

Harold stopped pounding on the door. "Keep on talking," whispered Duchy Moore. "Give me rats—say anything, only listen—don't mind what I say out loud. You were good to me, Harold, and I don't forget, even if I am a drunken bum."

"It's no use. I suppose I've got to stand it," said Harold aloud. "Get as far away from me as you can, though, Duchy Moore."

"So I ain't good enough for you?" retorted Duchy. "Well, mebber; but you know you and me have been acquainted a long time, Harold. I don't want to see you in here. I'd like to see you out and able to skip, for they'll railroad you sure if you don't. Tell me all about it, and mebber I can show you a way to escape. I'll do it—you can change clothes with me, and the keeper will never tumble if you tip him a ten. I've got it, and you shall have it if you want to try it on."

"I'll think about it," replied Harold, "but what good will that do me? Ain't you a prisoner, too? Anyhow, I've got nothing to tell you, Duchy Moore."

"Yes, but I'm only in for a month, and the month is up to-morrow. You'd better do it. I'll take the chances; you can pay me later on."

They were now standing together under the window, and Duchy, with a wary look at the partition, and dropping his voice to the faintest possible whisper, said:

"This is Mapes' work, Harold. He hired them detectives—he told me he was going to do it. He means to get you out of that contract and turn it over to Plankman. Mapes is as big a scoundrel as ever went unhung, and he has sworn to down you, 'cause he thinks your father put away a big lot of money somewhere, and he's trying to find out where, and to get you out of the way before he does it. That's the nigger in the fence, Harold. But never you fear. I'll watch him. I'll be out to-morrow, and I swear I'll not drink a drop till I've put you in shape to show up Mapes to all Dillsburg for what he is."

Harold pressed the firebug's hand silently.

Poor Duchy! It brought the tears to his eyes. Nothing like trouble for making friends.

But, after all, Harold had sat beside Duchy Moore in school, and in spite of the depth of degradation into which the poor wretch had fallen he still had a soft spot in his heart for him.

It was a terrible night. Harold never slept a wink. Toward morning Mulvey came in again and bullied and threatened, keeping the poor boy on the rack until dawn.

But this was the last. At ten o'clock next day Harold was taken before Judge Ramsey for examination. The room was packed with people. But with the exception of Dick Johnson, who waved his hand encouragingly, there was not one sympathetic face among them all.

Judge Ramsey was as cold as an icebox, and Dr. Walton seemed to avoid Harold's eye.

Harold answered the questions put to him in a firm, manly way. The two detectives told their story. It wound up by the judge holding Harold for trial in twenty thousand dollars bail.

Then old Mr. Fortescue, who had been sitting in the background, promptly sprang to his feet. "I'll furnish the bail!" he cried. "Let the papers be drawn up."

Everybody seemed surprised. Detective Mulvey was furious.

Mr. Fortescue went into Judge Ramsey's private office, and

after about twenty minutes came out again. As he passed Harold he extended his hand. Harold seized it gratefully.

"How can I ever thank you, sir?" he breathed.

"By proving your innocence, and you'll do it," was the reply, and then Mr. Fortescue hurried away, and Harold walked out, a free man.

But his troubles were not yet over. The crowd followed, hooting, and calling out all sorts of disagreeable things.

"You'd better get out of town!" yelled one.

"We don't want any bank robbers in Dillsburg!" bawled another.

Harold, who had hold of Dick Johnson's arm, and was hurrying away as fast as possible, could stand it no longer.

He turned and faced the crowd.

"Here I am!" he shouted. "You all know me. Look at me. Do whatever you like with me. I see among you fifty faces that I know to be the faces of men whom my father gave work to—men he kept out of the poor house, men who owed him money and owe it still. I will never leave Dillsburg until I have proven my innocence. If you want me, come and take me. You all know me. I am my father's son!"

Some laughed, others sneered, while one or two cried out: "Bravo! Good for you, Harold! You tell the truth. Your father kept half the town out of the poor house last winter! Hit 'em again!"

Then all at once there was a movement among the crowd, and Dr. Walton, with Kate leaning on his arm, pushed his way to the front.

Harold turned away.

"Come, Dick," he whispered, "we'll move on."

"Holly! Oh, Holly!" called a cheerful voice behind him. "Wait a moment, won't you? Here's Kate. We want you to come and dine with us. We are going straight home, so you may as well come now."

The crowd heard, and slunk away. There was no bigger man in Dillsburg than Dr. Walton, no more popular girl than Kate. No more jibes and jeers now.

"Doctor," said Harold, as the old gentleman took his arm familiarly, "I shall never forget this as long as I live, but I can't go."

"Can't go? Nonsense! You must go!"

"Of course you must, Harold," chimed in Kate.

"No, I can't—I really can't. I—I— Have pity on me, doctor. I'm about used up with it all."

"There! there! Don't you say a word!"

The doctor's arm went about the poor boy's neck as they walked along.

"Never mind, Harold. We'll work it out somehow," he said. "The judge thinks you guilty, but I trust in you implicitly. Yes, yes. We'll work it out."

"And that's why I won't go," said Harold. "Work is what I want. It's the only thing that will save me. I'm going straight up to the High School to begin work now."

Dick groaned. The doctor looked grave.

"Poor boy, you don't know all," he said in his most sympathetic tone.

"Know—what?" gasped Harold.

"Why, it's no use for you to go to the school. The committee met yesterday and canceled your contract. They've given the building to Plankman to finish."

He might have added that a dozen liens against Harold had been put upon the building which would have put a stop to his work in any event.

But Harold never waited for him to add anything.

This was the last straw.

Overcome by his feelings, the persecuted boy tore himself away, hastily turned into Ash street and hurried off, paying no heed to the doctor's shout for him to return.

CHAPTER XII.

DUCHY MOORE PROVES HIMSELF AS GOOD AS HIS WORD.

That night and for several nights succeeding, Harold Holly slept with Dick Johnson, for somehow he could not bear to return to the room where he had so thought and planned, hoped and suffered all on account of the tarnished name left by his unfortunate father.

But he had anything but a peaceful time of it during those days.

Men came crowding upon him to serve notices of liens, writs, and all sorts of disagreeable things.

For let it be understood by those of our readers, who are not familiar with the laws governing the building trades, that the misfortune which had befallen Harold struck two ways.

First and foremost, he had lost his business and what chances he might have had of making profit out of it.

Second, he was still liable for all debts contracted on the building during the time he held the contract, and his creditors, now seeing no immediate chance of getting their money, seemed to have all joined in one grand conspiracy to "jump on him," as the saying goes.

Many a bothered builder has taken "French leave" for less cause than Dillsburg's young contractor had.

But Harold walked fearlessly through the streets, apparently regardless of the bold looks and sneering remarks which met him on every side.

These were Harold's days of perplexity and disgrace, but they only made him stronger, and more resolved to do his best.

One night, about a week after Harold's release from jail, someone threw a pebble against Dick Johnson's window, and then a peculiar whistle was heard.

It was after twelve o'clock, and the boys were both in bed, though not asleep, for they had been talking about Harold's affairs.

"What's that?" exclaimed Dick, springing up when the whistle came a second time.

"Sounds as though someone were trying to call you, Dick," said Harold. "That's the old whistle. It must be some of our crowd."

Dick threw up the window and thrust his head out.

"Duchy Moore, by thunder!" he gasped.

"At last!" breathed Harold, leaping out of bed.

"Hist! Don't make no noise!" called the dark figure standing under the window, in a suppressed voice. "Is Harold there?"

"Yes, yes! Here I am," replied Harold, leaning out of the window. "Come up, Duchy! Come right up!"

"Can't!" answered Duchy. "Dassen't stop a minute. I've been meaning to see you for the last two days, Harold, but I haven't had the chance. I had to come now, though. Say, Harold, he's found the paper. You want to look out for yourself. I'm engaged to go out on the river with him to-night."

"Duchy! You don't mean it!"

"Yes. I'm giving it to you straight. I promised, Harold. I don't forget. Oh, he's so bitter against you! He tried to hire me work the folks up to give you a coat of tar and feathers, and ride you out of town on a rail. It's hard to hear these things, but I'd be no friend of yours if I didn't tell you, and I am your friend."

Harold caught his breath.

"I can stand it all, Duchy. Where did he find it?"

"In the High School. There behind a secret panel which I suppose your father—"

"Hush!" interrupted Harold. "Where do you start from and when?"

"From the end of the coal docks in half an hour."

"You two alone?"

"Yes. Don't be afraid to strike. I'm on your side every

time, old man, but I must go now. So-long, Harold! You'll come?"

"Yes," said Harold, firmly, and then Duchy ran away.

"What's all this?" demanded Dick, much mystified, for Harold was beginning to put on his clothes.

"Don't ask me, Dick. What you heard you heard, but I shan't tell you any more except that Mapes is the man Duchy meant. You will go with me, won't you? Don't if you don't want to. There may be trouble, but—"

"Don't you say another word, Harold. Of course I'll go, but I would like to understand."

Natural enough in Dick, to be sure, but Harold did not humor him.

When they reached the wharf where the Kate lay, he was no wiser than when they started, except in one particular.

Mr. Mapes' boat was off the coal docks. Duchy Moore was steering. They seemed to be heading for Ten Pound Island, as far as Harold could judge.

"Quick, Dick!" he exclaimed. "We haven't a moment to lose! Get aboard, lively! I wouldn't lose sight of that boat for a thousand dollars, poor as I am to-night!"

The boys tumbled on board, Harold ran up the sheet, and they were soon under way.

"They see us!" cried Dick, after a little. "Say, Harold, if we keep close at their heels nothing won't come out of this in my way of thinking: There, what did I tell you! They've changed their course and are standing up the river; best thing we can do is to head straight across and catch 'em on the tack."

"I guess you're right," replied Harold. "Do it, Dick."

So Dick steered around the point of the island, and they were soon out of sight of the other boat.

"Ease her up," said Harold, "work back now to the point so we can just get a sight of her without being seen ourselves."

Dick started to obey.

As he brought the Kate's nose in toward shore, a man suddenly ran out upon the rocks and waved his hand.

"Keep off!" he shouted. "Keep off! I own this island! Don't you dare to land here!"

"What in the world!" exclaimed Dick. "Is that fellow looney, or what?"

"Keep off!" yelled the man. "Keep off! if you don't it will be the worse for you."

He stooped down, and picking up a rifle, sent a shot flying at the boat, the bullet whistling within an inch of Harold's head.

"By gracious! There's no fun in that!" cried Dick, ducking down in the bottom of the boat.

"I should say not!" gasped Harold. "I almost got it that time, but you needn't be afraid, Dick, he can't hurt us now."

Dick peered over the gunwale and saw what Harold had taken in at a glance.

The man had fired his last shot.

He kept snapping away, however, and did not seem to realize that the rifle was not being discharged.

"Sheer off! Sheer off! You can't land here!" he kept yelling.

But Harold so held the sheet that the Kate shot in under the point close to the shore just as he had intended.

"Don't land, Harold! Don't! It's a terrible risk!" cried Dick. "He's crazy! He'll kill us! Let's get away!"

"Why, don't you know him, Dick?" replied Harold. "Can't you see who it is?"

"No!"

"Look sharp! There, the clouds are off the moon! Now's your chance to see his face."

"Great Scott! It's Mr. Conklin!" Dick almost shouted.

CHAPTER XIII.

CONKLIN FIRES AT MAPES.

Perhaps the man on the shore heard him, for he suddenly turned, plunged into the bushes and disappeared.

"That's who it is," said Harold, coolly. "Drop the anchor, Dick. This is as good a place as any. We've got every chance to watch them here."

Dick obeyed in silence.

Harold, who was watching him out of the corner of his eye, saw a curious look come over his face.

"Dick!"

"What is it, Harold?"

"I am my father's son."

"Wha—what do you mean, Harold? Why do you say that to me?"

"I've got a bad name in Dillsburg, Dick—an awful bad name—and for the first time it has affected you."

Dick was silent.

"For the moment you believe me guilty," continued Harold. "Because Mr. Conklin suddenly popped out on us—from where or how or why I have no more idea than you have—for that reason, Dick, you are believing that I really did help rob the bank—that——"

"Stop, Harold—stop!" Dick suddenly broke in, at the same time standing up in the boat. "If you don't stop, I declare I'll jump overboard and swim ashore!"

Tears were in the boy's eyes.

Harold saw that he had wounded him deeply.

"It ain't so," said Dick, brokenly. "I was only surprised to see Conklin—that's all. I'd as soon believe myself guilty as believe it of you, Harold—I would indeed!"

It was Harold's turn to be moved now.

"Pardon me, Dick! I'm getting so sensitive—so suspicious of everyone; and then just at this time; it almost looked as though I had expected to meet him, but I vow and declare——"

"If you do I'm going!" cried Dick. "I won't hear another word! Of course I know it's all an accident; but have we forgotten what we came for? See, here comes Mapes. He'll see us if we don't look sharp!"

Harold looked off beyond the point and saw that Mapes had turned and was heading the boat for the island.

"If he holds his course he means to round the point and land here," said Dick.

"We'd better get ashore and wait for him," replied Harold. "Quick! Up with the anchor, old man, we'll beach the boat and hide in the bushes. If Conklin don't turn up again and raise a row he'll never suspect that the boat belongs to us."

"Unless he reads her name," said Dick.

As Dick dropped the heavy stone into the bottom of the boat, Harold seized the oars and pulled ashore.

They drew the boat up on the beach, and crouched down among the bushes.

"Heavens! What if Conklin loads up again and shoots us?" whispered Dick.

"Pshaw! There's no danger," answered Harold, but he was far from being as confident as his words implied.

From their hiding-place they could not see Mapes' boat then, but in a few moments it came in sight."

Harold saw that he was heading directly for the cove where the Kate lay.

He had not long to wait.

Inside of ten minutes Mapes was in the cove.

He ran the boat close up to the bank, Duchy Moore threw over the anchor, and they both leaped ashore.

"Who owns this boat?" growled Mapes. "Duchy, ain't this the one we saw following us?"

"Don't think so," replied Duchy. "Looks to me as though some picnic party must have left it here."

"Read the name—can you?"

"No; I can't see."

"I can then. By thunder, it's the Kate, Harold Holly's boat! Just as I said. That boy is onto us. Duchy, I believe on my soul you've been giving me away!"

"Come now, boss, you know better than that. What in the world would I do a thing like that for—say, what are you going to do?"

"Send her adrift!" cried Mapes, seizing the Kate and shoving her out into the water.

Harold was in dismay.

If he could have prevented this he might have tried to interfere, but it was done before he could realize what Mapes was about.

"You did! You've sold me out, you drunken thief!" cried the committeeman, turning suddenly on Duchy and striking at him with a spade which he had brought with him out of the boat.

Duchy dodged the blow and rushed at Mapes' throat.

But he had only one arm, and Mapes who dropped the spade and grappled with him would have made short work of him, if he had been left to himself.

It was not in human nature to hold back any longer.

Feeling that it might mean death to poor Duchy, Harold and Dick rushed to the rescue.

"Drop him, Mapes! Don't you dare hit him again, you cowardly scoundrel!" Harold shouted.

He struck out at Mapes and dealt him a stunning blow under the left ear.

Mapes reeled, and stumbling, fell back into the water.

"Ha! Ha! Ha! That's right, give him another! He's a liar and a thief!" yelled a voice from the woods.

It was Conklin. He was standing on the top of a big rock not far away.

But Harold did not even stop to look at him.

He tried to seize Mapes, who was struggling in the water.

How it might have ended, it is difficult to say, for at that instant Conklin began firing his rifle right into their midst.

The shots flew right and left and the boys made a bolt for the bushes, closely followed by Duchy Moore.

"Get off my island! Get off my island, the whole lot of you!" roared Conklin, turning the rifle on Mapes.

It was too much for the committeeman.

Whatever plan he may have had was quickly abandoned.

He swam for the boat, showing himself perfectly at home in the water.

The next the boys knew he had cut the anchor rope, run up the sheet and was standing out on the river.

Conklin fired a few shots after him, but Mapes was somewhere in the bottom of the boat, and never showed himself.

Waving his rifle wildly above his head, the cashier leaped off the rock, and plunging into the woods disappeared, while Mapes, with a twist of his helm, sent the boat around the point—a moment more and she was lost to view.

CHAPTER XIV.

HAROLD'S STOCK RISES

"Well, by thunder, this is an interesting state of affairs," growled Duchy Moore as the boat disappeared. "He's gone, and here we are left on the island, and no way of getting off it, and to make matters worse, there's that infernal madman hunting us with a gun, and liable to put a bullet into us any minute. By time, I don't like it for a cent!"

"It's all your fault!" cried Harold, angrily. "I'd have that scoundrel, and then——"

"And then you'd have done him like enough, and got so tight in jail that you'd never have got out except to go to the

gallows," broke in Duchy. "No, no, Harold! That wouldn't do at all. Me and Dick think entirely too much of you to let you kill Mapes."

But they had all they could do to hold him, and Harold was so worked up about it now that it took him a full ten minutes to cool down.

"It's all spoiled," he grumbled. "I'll never get the chance again. I want that paper. If my father left it in the school-house it belongs to me."

"Well, what's the matter with you? Here it is," interposed Duchy, producing a large leather wallet. "He put it in here, and I guess it's here yet."

"Does that belong to Mapes?" cried Harold, in amazement.

"Sure it does," said Duchy.

"But how did you get it?"

"Picked his pocket while we were in the boat. A fellow may as well use what talents he's got, especially in a good cause."

Harold, not knowing what to say, said nothing, and Duchy coolly proceeded to go through the wallet.

There was about forty dollars in it, counting up the odd change and various receipts, unpaid bills and other papers, but to the intense disgust of the pick-pocket, the particular paper desired was not to be found.

"By thunder, this is too bad," growled Duchy; "I was sure he put it in here."

"I'm almost as well satisfied that it isn't there," shouted Harold. "Picking pockets is away out of my line, Duchy. I think you'd better give that to me."

"Indeed I won't," chuckled the thief. "I'm with you every time, Harold, and I'm against Mapes. Of course I can't never go back to Dillsburg again now, and as he owes me money, I'll just take my pay out of this."

Harold sighed and said nothing. Dick, feeling that it was none of his business, wisely kept silent as Duchy pocketed the money, tore up the papers, and threw the wallet away.

"Did you read that paper?" asked Harold, breaking silence after a little.

Duchy glanced at Dick.

"Go on," said Harold. "I have no secrets from Dick. Speak out."

"Well, then, I didn't see it, but he read it to me," said Duchy. "It was addressed to you, Harold. It ran something like this: 'I'm in trouble; a sum of money has unexpectedly come into my hands. It will not pay my debts, therefore I am going to hide it for your benefit, in case I am taken. I shall conceal it on Ten Pound Island'—and then it went on to tell where, Harold, but that part he didn't read to me. It was signed by your father's name."

Dick's eyes opened wide as he listened to all this, but he held his tongue and waited for Harold to speak.

"If I ever find it, every dollar goes to the creditors," said Harold, firmly.

"You're a fool!" sneered Duchy.

"Good for you!" cried Dick. "Harold, you are a trump! I never admired you so much as I do at this moment. Stick to that, old man."

They had plenty of time to talk it out before morning, but as a matter of fact, the subject was not alluded to again.

Perhaps Duchy thought he had gone a step too far, for he did not revive the discussion, but he did tell Harold a great deal about Mapes and his villany—enough to jail the man ten times over if Mr. Duchy Moore's testimony in the witness box had been worth anything—which it was not.

Daylight found their situation unchanged.

Mapes did not return, and nothing more was seen or heard of Mr. Conklin.

It was evident Duchy believed that Harold knew more about the cashier than he was disposed to tell.

"Well, what's to be done?" demanded Dick, as the sun rose. "Are we to put in the day here?"

It looked very much as if they would have to unless someone came to the rescue or they swam ashore, for nothing was to be seen of the Kate.

Harold never doubted that his boat had gone over the falls.

"We'll have to swim across to the west shore, that's all," he said in reply to Dick's question. "I don't suppose you are a it, Duchy, but we can get a boat and come back after you."

"I'd be in it if it wasn't for my arm," replied Duchy. "But what about Conklin? If you was to look him up, Harold——"

"Don't you say that to me, Duchy Moore!" flashed Harold.

"I know no more about the man than you do. I——"

"Hark!" cried Dick.

"Music," said Duchy.

"Great Scott! It's the Fire Fly!" exclaimed Harold. "Here she comes! The whole Fortescue tribe are off on a picnic! Well, I'll have to sink my pride and hail them, for we can't stay here."

It was just as Harold said.

Mr. Fortescue's pretty pleasure boat had just come into view around the lower point of the island.

She was crowded with a gay party of ladies and gentlemen; a band of three pieces, harp, flute and violin, were playing in the stern, and everybody seemed to be enjoying themselves hugely, but it was no enjoyment to Harold to go down to the shore and signal the Fire Fly by waving his hat, which he did.

The captain—it was not Mat Bellis—did not seem to understand the signal at first, nor did the passengers, for the ladies crowded to the rail and fluttered their handkerchiefs and the gentlemen waved their hats.

But when they drew nearer, Harold shouted:

"We've lost our boat! We are tied up here! Will you take us off?"

"There's old man Fortescue. I suppose I've got to tell him all about it," he added, as he caught sight of the millionaire.

"I wouldn't say a word," suggested Dick.

"There ain't no need of it—not a bit," said Duchy. "Here they come! By time, I'm a nice looking subject to go into company, and that's a fact."

Harold took this advice.

When a few minutes later they found themselves on board the Fire Fly, and Rose Fortescue and her friends came crowding around them, Harold simply said that they had come out to the island the night before on the Kate, and that she had drifted away.

"Good!" cried Rose. "I'm glad of it, Mr. Holly; that gives me a chance to get even with you. You saved my life, and now I've rescued you from a desert island and you will have to go with us on our picnic," and the merry-hearted girl began introducing Harold to her friends right and left.

Some were cordial, but others turned away and showed by their coldness that Harold and his bad name were well known to them.

It was an embarrassing situation—very much so.

"Really, Miss Fortescue, it will be impossible for me to join you," stammered Harold. "If you will put me ashore at Dillsburg, I'll be a thousand times obliged to you, but——"

"But you don't go ashore!" said a brusque voice behind him, and Mr. Fortescue pushed his way through the crowd.

"Ladies and gentlemen," he said, putting his hand on Harold's shoulder, "this is my young friend, Mr. Holly, and I want you all to know him. Harold, my boy, I've got good news for you. There's to be a new town hall built over at Risley, figures go in on Thursday. Plans can be seen to-day. I want you to figure on the contract and I'll back you with my last dollar if you get it. We'll take you up to Risley now, and

you can go over the plans and specifications while we are dancing in Longwood Grove. That's the sort of a picnic you shall go on—come, what do you say?

What could Harold say?

He tried to speak, but the words would not come.

Here was a friend indeed.

A man who had known his father to his cost and yet was willing to stand by his father's son.

"It's settled!" cried the millionaire. "Get to your dancing, young folks. Harold, here's Rose, waiting for a partner. Never mind your clothes, my boy. Let's see you trip the light fantastic, and enjoy yourself while you may."

Then, when the band struck up a waltz, Harold, who was a most graceful dancer, went gliding around the deck with his arm encircling Rose Fortescue's waist, while the Fire Fly steamed up the river, the water sparkling as though strewn with diamonds in the light of the morning sun.

CHAPTER XV.

HAROLD'S STOCK FALLS.

Never in his life had Harold felt more thoroughly hopeful than when he boarded the Fire Fly late that afternoon at Risley landing.

Dick was still with him, but Duchy Moore, who had the good grace to keep out of the way on the up trip, had gone off about his business when the boat landed him at Risley, and the boys had not seen him since.

"Well?" demanded Mr. Fortescue, "what luck, Harold? Did you get the job?"

"I don't see why I shouldn't get it, sir," replied Harold; "there are only four other figures, all city men and notoriously high bidders. I believe I can figure all around them and capture the job, if——"

He paused and looked confused.

"If," repeated Mr. Fortescue.

"If my bad name don't stand in the way, sir, to be frank with you. I may as well say what I think."

"It won't! It shan't! They treated you all right up at Risley, didn't they?"

"Indeed they did. The architect was there and he was kindness itself, and Mr. Barnard, the chairman of the committee, not only made no objections to my figuring, but said he had intended to wire me to-day to come up and figure."

"You see."

"I suspect it's your doings, sir."

"Perhaps it is; never you mind. Make up your figures and put them in. By the way, I've cancelled those bonds on the High School."

"I suppose they are no use any longer?" sighed Harold.

"Not as matters stand. But remember, if they are wanted again, they are ready any time; all you have to do is to ask."

"How can they ever be wanted again? Plankman has got the contract, and of course he will keep it."

"Will he?" replied Mr. Fortescue, dryly. "We shall see."

Harold sat up all night working on the plans of the Risley town hall.

Dick watched him for awhile, and then turned in, for the mass of figures which Harold had spread over a dozen sheets of paper were all Greek to him.

But Harold knew what he was about perfectly.

For two years before his father's death he had helped him in this sort of work.

It was all finished on Thursday morning, and at ten o'clock, accompanied by Dick, Harold started up the river in a hired boat—nothing had been heard of the Kate—and they reached Risley a little before noon.

Harold went straight to the old town hall, where he found the committee in session, and his bid was handed in.

To wait inside with the other contractors was something not to be endured, so Harold and Dick went to the hotel and had a quiet dinner, returning to the town hall at half-past one, by which time it was expected that the matter would be decided.

As he entered the building he found quite a gathering of people.

"We won't have it!" a man was shouting. "I tell you gentlemen, we are all to be taxed for this building, and we won't see the contract given to a jail-bird and a thief."

Harold turned pale.

"Great heavens, Dick! I'm going to get it again," he whispered.

"Holly, Mr. Holly! Please step this way!" shouted Mr. Barnard, the chairman of the committee, catching sight of Harold at the door.

Still very pale, but perfectly cool and determined, Harold pushed through the crowd, which was composed of the solid business men of the town.

Black looks met him on every hand, and he heard several whisper the old taunt:

"He's his father's son."

"Mr. Holly," said Mr. Barnard, when he came up to the desk, "you are the lowest bidder for the new town hall and we are disposed to award you the contract. You will have to furnish bonds for its faithful performance, and——"

"And I can do it, sir!" broke in Harold. "Mr. Fortescue will go on my bond for any amount."

"Of that we are aware," said Mr. Barnard; "but one surety is not enough—there must be two."

"Give me time to consult Mr. Fortescue, sir, and it can no doubt be arranged."

"No!" shouted the man whom Harold had overheard. "He shan't have the contract! Gentlemen, we protest! This young man bears a bad name. He is a——"

"What—what is he?" burst out Harold, unable to contain himself any longer. "Of what am I accused? Speak out!"

"Of robbing the Dillsburg bank!" shouted a voice.

"The High School was taken away from him!" bawled another. "They don't want him in Dillsburg, and we don't want him here!"

"And we won't have him!" yelled still another. "Hustle him out! Barnard shan't overrule us! Hustle him out!"

Then they all closed around Harold.

One seized him by the collar, another caught him by the right arm, another still by the left.

"Order—order!" shouted Mr. Barnard.

But nobody paid the slightest attention to him.

Poor Harold was dragged out of the town hall without ceremony and violently pushed down the steps into the street.

CHAPTER XVI.

MR. MAPES DIGS A HOLE.

Perhaps it was the hardest hit Harold Holly ever received, when he was practically pitched out of the town hall at Risley.

Even Dick Johnson's sturdy friendship could not comfort the much persecuted boy.

He returned to Dillsburg, scarcely speaking a word during the long sail down the river.

When the boys reached their room, Harold flung down the bundle of papers relating to the Risley contract, and taking his old valise from the closet, pulled open the bureau drawer and began packing his clothes.

"What in the world are you doing, Harold?" exclaimed Dick, in great alarm.

"Packing up," replied the boy, briefly.

"But where are you going?"

"I don't know, and I don't care. Away somewhere—anywhere. I'm tired of this. I'm going where no one knows me

—where no one will ever again tell me that I'm my father's son."

Dick thrust his hands into his trouser's pockets and whistled.

"Say, Harold, I wouldn't do anything like that," he remarked.

"No use talking, Dick—I'm determined."

"But I wouldn't let them worry me. That's just what they want. Think how Mapes will chuckle! Think of Mr. Fortescue and what he'll think of you."

"And don't I?" cried Harold. "I guess I don't forget what Mr. Fortescue has done for me. I'm not going to jump my bail, old man. When the time comes for me to stand trial I'll be on hand."

Dick saw how bitterly he was feeling, so with a sigh he gave it up.

Harold finished his packing, sat down and wrote a brief letter to Mr. Fortescue, and then shaking hands with Dick, started for the station to catch the evening train, positively refusing to let his friend accompany him, all of which was so trying to poor Dick's nerves that he sat down on the edge of the bed and actually cried.

As Harold passed the post-office he started to go in and put his letter in the box, when who should be just coming out the door but Kate Walton, who greeted him in the kindest possible manner.

"Why, Harold! Where are you going?" she said in a low tone, for there were many persons standing near waiting for the evening mail.

"I'm going to New York, Kate," replied Harold, half hanging his head, for there was something in the tone which made him feel rather ashamed of his hasty determination.

"Not to leave us?"

"Yes."

"I wouldn't, Harold."

"You would if you were in my place, Kate. You don't know what I have suffered. If you did——"

"Perhaps I know more than you think for. I've heard all about what happened at Risley to-day."

"That's only part."

"Don't let them drive you out of town, Harold. You'll forfeit my respect if you do."

Harold's face had grown very red by this time.

Somehow the matter began to present itself in an entirely different light.

"Kate," he said slowly, "do you mean to say that you would consider me a coward if I gave it all up and went away?"

"I should be greatly disappointed," replied Kate, gently. "You still have many friends in Dillsburg who are working for you."

"Only yourself and your father, Kate."

"Others that you know nothing of. Don't leave us, Harold. Be a man and face it out. Even if the worst should happen, we would respect you all the more."

Harold took the letter out of his pocket and, tearing it up, flung the pieces away.

"It's settled, Kate. I'll stay," he said. "You've shown me myself. I was a coward to think of leaving. I'll stay and live it down."

"Always remember that it is the darkest just before dawn," said Kate, cheerfully; "now I want you to see me home, and you would particularly oblige me if you stayed to tea."

Tears came to Harold's eyes, but he brushed them away and walked proudly through the streets of Dillsburg with Kate Walton.

To such old acquaintances as he met he bowed politely, some returned the salutation coldly, others paid no attention to him, but he kept right on and recognized each one he met.

"That's right," said Kate, "treat everybody politely, no matter how they treat you; don't let all this persecution make you one bit less a gentleman, Harold, and it is sure to tell in time."

Of course this was good advice, and Harold resolved to follow it, no matter how hard it came.

He could not well refuse Kate's pressing invitation, so he spent the evening at Dr. Walton's and had a very enjoyable time of it.

At half past ten o'clock Harold bade these kind friends good-night and started for the room.

No doubt he would have gone straight there and have been in bed in twenty minutes time if he had not happened to get sight of Mr. Mapes just turning the corner of Maple street.

Harold's enemy was evidently in a hurry.

"By gracious! I wonder if he is going over to the island again?" thought the boy, as he stopped to watch the store-keeper's retreating form.

The temptation to find out just what Mapes was up to was more than Harold could master.

But he felt that it would not do to follow at the man's heels, so he hurried along to Walnut street, and ran as fast as his legs could carry him to the wharf, where he had always kept the Kate.

One glance over at the coal wharf showed him that he had made no mistake.

Mapes was there in his boat and alone.

"He's off for the island as sure as fate," thought Harold; "I'll take Will Faxon's boat; if anything happens to it I'll make it good to him. I must know what that scoundrel is up to if it takes a leg."

Running down to the end of the wharf where Will Faxon's boat lay, Harold dropped his grip into it and cautiously climbed down himself, crouching low and watching Mapes over the gunwale while he got up his sail and worked his boat out into the river.

Soon he was under full headway and steering straight for the island.

"It won't do for me to be seen this time," thought Harold; "that's what spoiled it all before. Of course, he'll head for the cove; I'll wait until he has rounded the point."

It required all the patience the boy could command, for his was a nature which wanted to be up and doing.

But he restrained himself until Mapes and his boat had disappeared around the point of the island.

Then he sent Will Faxon's dainty craft flying across the river, landing on the westerly side of the point, where he was perfectly safe from observation.

"If he's there, he won't escape me this time," thought Harold; "and he won't get his hands on this boat either, if I know it. Gracious! There'd be trouble if he should send her over the falls as he did the Kate. Faxon would have me arrested sure."

To guard against this uncomfortable possibility, he drew the boat up out of the water and hid it among the bushes, leaving his grip with it and then went stealing along the shore until he came in sight of the cove.

Harold caught his breath when he saw Mapes' boat drawn up on the beach.

A sound suddenly heard broke up his soliloquy.

It came from the woods at no great distance from where Harold was standing.

It was the sound of iron striking against stone.

"He's at it," thought Harold, and cautiously parting the bushes he crept on until he suddenly caught sight of a light ahead down close to the ground.

A few cautious steps further and all was made plain.

There was Mr. Mapes in the little clearing which surrounded a ruinous old hut, long a landmark on the island, industriously

digging a hole at the foot of a tall pine tree by the light of a lantern, which stood beside him on the ground.

CHAPTER XVII.

HOW HAROLD GOT THE IRON BOX.

After Mr. Mapes had worked away on the hole for a few moments he rested on his spade.

Presently he put the spade down, and taking up the lantern, drew a paper from his pocket, which he carefully unfolded and for a few moments stood studying it.

Then he resumed his digging, carrying the hole more to the left.

Harold watched him breathlessly.

For fully ten minutes Mapes toiled away, throwing the dirt out of the hole.

Then all at once the spade struck something hard which gave back a ringing sound.

"By gracious, he's found it!" thought Harold. "I wouldn't wonder a bit if it was father's old iron cash box! Heavens! How could he do it? How could he hide money when he owed so much?"

He felt ashamed for his father then—ashamed for himself that he was his father's son.

For let it be understood that Harold never doubted the story of the buried money.

He had the best of reason to believe that his father might have received a large sum shortly before his death from the sale of certain Western timber land of which he had long been the owner.

Had he hidden the money in the old iron cash box, for which Harold had searched in vain?

These were the boy's thoughts when he suddenly saw Mr. Mapes fling down the spade and bend over the hole.

Harold held his breath.

"If it's the iron box there'll be a fight for it," he determined.

Sure enough, out it came.

When the storekeeper straightened up there was the old cash box in his hand—Harold knew it at a glance.

He gave a chuckling laugh and shook the dirt off of it.

"At last," he muttered. "I guess I shall be square with Jack Holly now! There ain't no doubt but what the money is in it."

He put the box upon the ground and tried to pry it open with the spade.

Here was Harold's chance.

As he stood Mapes' back was turned toward him.

Harold crouched low and crept toward him, his stealthy footsteps making no noise upon the soft grass.

All at once he made a spring and caught the money digger under the arms.

"Murder!" yelled Mapes, for Harold, who was as strong as a horse, gave him one fling which sent him sprawling on the grass, face downward.

It was an open question if the storekeeper realized who hit him.

Harold seized the box and, plunging into the woods, vanished in an instant.

He heard Mapes scramble up and run after him.

"Stop! Stop!" he yelled. "I see you! Stop! I'm going to fire!"

"Bluff!" thought Harold, and he ran all the faster.

The thought had scarcely crossed his mind, when the sharp crack of a rifle rang out behind him.

The sound was instantly followed by a yell of agony, and someone was heard to fall.

"Gracious! Has he shot himself?" thought Harold.

He stopped running and listened.

A low, chuckling laugh broke the stillness.

"He's playing it on me," thought the boy; "he only wants to draw me nearer," and he started again, reaching the boat a moment later.

Here he paused, all out of breath.

Perfect silence reigned.

Harold could hear no other sound than the wild beating of his own heart.

"I'd better get out anyway," he resolved. "I can't afford to take chances. If Mapes has shot himself it's his own fault. I'll let his folks know and they can look him up; as for me, I've got to look after the box."

He placed the box in the cuddy under the forward seat, and was just about to drag the boat out of the bushes, when a second shot rang out from behind him.

Instantly Harold felt a sharp, stinging sensation in his left shoulder.

"Great heavens! I'm shot!" he gasped.

"Ha! Ha! Ha! I've got you!" yelled a voice from the bushes. "You will come on my island, will you! Ho! Ho! Ho!"

Out of the thicket a man came running with a smoking rifle in his hand.

But Harold never saw him.

Poor Harold was unconscious by the side of the boat.

CHAPTER XVIII.

AT THE MERCY OF A MADMAN.

The man flung down the rifle and bent over Harold, turning him over and peering into his face.

"Humph! I'm afraid I've made a mistake," he muttered.

"This is evidently Harold Holly. I didn't mean to shoot him. I thought he was some friend of that scoundrel, Mapes."

He stood up and rubbed his forehead in a puzzled way.

He was tall and gaunt, with haggard face, sunken cheeks, and beard of several weeks' growth.

Certainly he was a most pitiable looking object, and few of the former friends of the cashier of the Dillsburg bank would have recognized him, yet it was Mr. Conklin and no one else.

After looking at Harold for a few moments, he picked the boy up in his arms and walked off into the woods with him, carrying him as easily as a woman would carry a baby.

Keeping on by a roundabout way, he at last came to the hut in the clearing where Mapes had done his digging.

He chuckled softly to himself as he glanced at the hole, and then entering the hut, carried Harold up-stairs into an unfinished loft, and laid him gently upon a dirty bed.

Again he fell into a ruminative state, and stood rubbing his forehead and staring at Harold, although it was scarcely to be supposed that he could see much with the loft pitch dark as it was.

Suddenly this seemed to occur to his muddled brain.

"Probably if I light a lamp I could see him better," he muttered. "No danger of Mapes seeing me now! Ha! Ha! I guess not! I think I've fixed Mapes! The wretch! It was he who put me up to robbing the bank! Only for him I wouldn't be here now, but he never got a cent—not a cent—and never will."

"Mr. Conklin! Is that you?"

Suddenly Harold spoke from the dark corner, for consciousness had come back again to the boy almost at the moment when the cashier laid him down, and he had been a silent listener to all this.

"Harold! Oh, Harold! I didn't mean to shoot you!" cried the unfortunate man, sinking on his knees beside the bed and seizing Harold's hand.

"Get the light, Mr. Conklin! I am bleeding terribly. Help me, quick, and you may save my life, but I'm a goner if something ain't done."

He felt the fainting fit coming on him again.

Probably he did faint, for the next he knew, Mr. Conklin was bending over him, binding up his wounded shoulder with a strip of cotton cloth, which seemed to have been torn from the bed sheet.

There was a smoky old lamp burning on a table and Harold could see the cashier's face at last; he could not keep back an exclamation as he perceived the awful change which had come to the man.

"There, there, keep quiet, Harold," said Mr. Conklin. "You are all right, my boy. It's only a flesh wound, the bullet did not enter. To think that I should have done it! Only to think of it! There, let me pull your shirt up and get your vest on. I had to cut the shirt away, Harold, in order to get at the wound. Of course you know I didn't mean to shoot you."

"Did you shoot Mr. Mapes?" asked Harold, trying to control his fears, for the cashier's hands trembled so that he could hardly work, and his eyes rolled wildly.

"Yes, yes, yes! I'd do it again, too!"

"Did you kill him?"

"Don't know and don't care. I'd do it again, too, I say! He's a scoundrel, Harold. I shot him and he tumbled down and then I chased you because I thought you were Duchy Moore. Don't look at me that way, boy. I've got the devil in me and he may come out. If I get one of my fits on me, heaven knows what I might do to you. I'll go and look up Mapes by and by."

"Have you been on the island ever since that night?" asked Harold.

"Yes, yes. Never mind that. Say, I hear you got arrested for being in with me. As though you were capable of it. Say, about that money—did it get back to the bank?"

"Yes."

"Good! 'Twasn't all, though. I've got the rest and I'm going to give it to you now, and you shall take it back to Dillsburg and give it to Judge Ramsey—that will set things right, won't it? Just you wait."

"Can you really make it all good?" cried Harold.

"All but about a thousand dollars. I spent that on my spree. Oh, Harold, whiskey is a terrible curse—you see what it's done for me. But, hush! I feel the fit coming—I must be quick!"

He hurried across the room, and kneeling down, pulled away a loose board at the wainscoting and took out a small bag.

"Here it is," he chuckled. "Here it is! Take it, Harold; you'll be all right in the morning and able to go over to town. Perhaps I'll go with you and give myself up—I'll see how I feel."

Harold seized the bag eagerly as Mr. Conklin extended it toward him.

At the same moment voices were heard below.

"Say, look at that hole," someone said. "I'll bet a sixpence it's Mapes' work. He's been here and got the buried money. Harold would have done better if he'd stuck to me."

"Duchy Moore!" whispered the madman, and his whole face changed.

"Where's my gun?" he hissed. "I'm going to kill him. Give me back the bag, Harold! Quick!"

"No, no! Keep cool!" said Harold. "It's all right."

"Give it to me! Give it to me!" cried Conklin, and then he began to yell and jump around the bed, waving his hands and snapping his fingers.

Harold spoke to him soothingly.

His voice seemed to make matters worse.

"Give it to me! Give me the bag!" shrieked the madman. Suddenly he caught up the lamp and flung it on the bed.

The chimney fell off and the bed clothes took fire.

"Ha! Ha! Ha!" yelled the madman. "You won't give it

up—eh? Well, then I'll make things so lively that you won't want to keep it. Ho! Ho! Ho!"

And he began jumping about wildly as the bed clothes burst into flame.

CHAPTER XIX.

HAROLD'S LUCKY FIND.

The sight of the blazing bed seemed to infuriate the madman all the more.

He shouted and yelled, and went tearing about the room at a tremendous rate, waving his arms, snapping his fingers, stamping his feet, and making a dreadful din.

Now, there is nothing like excitement to restore a man's failing strength.

A moment before Mr. Conklin threw the lighted lamp upon the bed, Harold tried to get up and fell back from sheer weakness, pretty sure that his last hour had come.

Now he sprang to his feet in a hurry, forgetting all about his wound.

"Give me the bag!" yelled the cashier, making a rush for him. "Give me the bag, Harold! Duchy Moore shan't get it! No, he shan't!"

Harold dodged and flung the bag out through the open window.

"Ah, ha! You would, would you?" screamed the cashier. "I'll kill you for that, my boy."

He jumped upon Harold and seized him by the throat.

Of course the wounded boy could not stand up against him. Down he went on the floor with Conklin on top.

Still clutching at his throat, the cashier shook him as a dog would shake a rat, choking him until he was black in the face, and beating his head against the boards.

It would have been all over with poor Harold in short order if help had not been near at hand.

Fortunately it was so.

Already hurried footsteps had been heard on the stairs, and right in the height of the struggle Duchy Moore and Dick Johnson came bursting into the room.

"Save me, Dick! Save me!" Harold was just able to gasp.

They rushed on the madman, but were not able to reach him, for the instant he caught sight of them he let go his hold, sprang up, made one leap through the window, and was gone.

It was the last Harold knew for some moments.

When he came to himself, he was outside, lying on the grass, with Dick bending over him.

The clearing was as light as day, the whole heavens being illuminated with the burning hut, which was now a mass of flames.

Dick gave a shout of joy when Harold opened his eyes and looked at him.

"He's alive, Duchy—he's alive!" he cried.

"Why, of course I'm alive," murmured Harold. "Help me up, Dick. I ain't going to die yet, old man."

"Not a bit of it!" cried Duchy, running up. "That's the talk, Harold! You only fainted, and no wonder. Here, stand him on his feet, Dick! He'll be all right in a minute. Lucky thing for you, Harold, that me and Dick came over here to have a search for the money on our own hook. By time, you'd have been roasted alive if we hadn't turned up as we did."

While he rattled on Duchy helped Dick to lift Harold up.

"Where's Mr. Conklin?" he asked.

"Gone—blest if I know where. He jumped out of the window and was off like a streak of greased lightning," Duchy replied.

"There was something else—a bag——"

"Is this it?" asked Dick.

To be sure it was, and the money was in it all right.

They opened it then and there, and Duchy's eyes grew big when he saw that it was stuffed with packages of bills.

Of course there was a lot of explaining to be done, and Harold went right at it, seeming to develop strength as he talked.

Meanwhile, the hut burned away and nobody paid any attention to it.

Dick was too much interested in Harold's story to care what became of the old wreck.

"Oh Harold!" he cried "see what you'd have missed if you had gone away; but what am I saying? Perhaps it would have saved your life. Your wound may be more serious than you think."

"I don't believe it," said Harold. "I feel quite myself again; we'll get right over to Dillsburg and let Dr. Walton examine it, but first we must try and find out what became of Mapes."

Following the direction he had taken when he ran away from the hole as nearly as possible, they tried to find the storekeeper, but did not succeed.

At last they came out upon the cove where Harold had seen the boat. It was no longer there, so they came to the conclusion that Mapes could not have been very badly hurt after all.

"His kind don't die easy," declared Duchy Moore. "I've no doubt he's taken his boat and gone home."

"Which we must do now," said Dick. "Harold, you must give it up and let me take you across to Dillsburg. Your life may depend upon it—who can tell?"

"I'll stay," said Duchy. "I want to see if I can't catch Conklin. I can come back in the boat Dick and I came over in, which is around on the other side of the island. You go on, boys, and never mind me."

"I shall never forget you, that's one sure thing," said Harold. "Duchy, shake hands. There'll be something in this for you for this night's work, if I ever get on my feet again."

Tears came to Duchy's eyes as he pressed Harold's hand.

So they parted, Dick supporting Harold as they walked slowly along the shore, until they came to the point.

Will Faxon's boat was where Harold left it, and when Dick opened the cuddy, there was the iron box, undisturbed.

When the boys reached Dillsburg it was almost morning, and Dick positively insisted that they should ring Dr. Walton up.

But Harold wouldn't have it.

"We'll go to the room," he said. "I don't want to disturb the doctor, and I don't believe there is any necessity for it. Besides I want to open the box."

So to the room they went, and Dick helped Harold to undress and the wound was examined.

It proved to be a mere scratch, just as Mr. Conklin had said.

"Pshaw! It's nothing!" declared Harold; "tie it up, Dick, and I'll get into bed; open my trunk and you'll find father's bunch of keys on the left-hand side of the top tray; I've no doubt the key of this box is on the ring."

Dick lost no time in obeying, for he was dying with curiosity to see the inside of the box.

Dick took the box in his lap after he got into bed, and tried key after key, and at last struck the right one; the lock snapped, and the lid flew up; an oblong package, wrapped around in oil skin, lay inside, with a folded paper on top.

Keeping Dick still in suspense about the contents of the package, Harold unfolded the paper, held it up to the light, and read as follows:

"TO MY SON, HAROLD HOLLY:

"The money in this box, amounting to \$40,000, is the exact sum received from the sales of my timber lands in Minnesota. As I am somewhat involved in my business, and do not desire

to beggar you, I have decided to bury this box until the High School is finished. I hope to straighten myself out with the profits on that contract; but should I die before I have accomplished this I desire that you should distribute this money equally among my creditors, reserving ten per cent. for yourself, to which you are justly entitled for the efficient services which you have rendered in keeping my accounts for the last two years.

"JOHN HOLLY.

"P. S.—Should this be found by accident by anyone but my son, I can only trust to the honor of the finder to deliver the box with the contents undisturbed to him to whom it rightfully belongs.

"J. H."

"Hooray!" cried Dick. "This ought to put you on your feet, Harold. Anyway, you'll have four thousand dollars to help you out of your hole."

"Not four cents," said Harold. "Father died owing fifty-two thousand dollars. I shall divide this money among the creditors and not keep a nickel for myself; then I'd like to meet the man who dares to sneer at me because I am my father's son!"

CHAPTER XX.

THE TURNING OF THE TIDE.

By eight o'clock next morning Harold was at Dr. Walton's door.

He was weak and nervous, but otherwise his wound seemed likely to give him but little trouble.

The good old doctor could scarcely contain himself when his protege told his exciting story and exhibited the box and the bag.

"Harold, you are a boy in a thousand!" he exclaimed. "I am proud of you, and I'm sure Kate will be when she comes to hear all this. The money in the bag shall go to Judge Ramsey immediately, and if he don't have the charge against you quashed, I'll never speak to him again. As for the rest, I'll take charge of it, if you will allow me, and call your father's creditors together with the least possible delay."

"Then you approve of my plan, doctor?" asked Harold.

"Entirely, my boy. It is the only honest course. As to your wound, don't you worry; it will be well in a day or two. I'll see that a search is made for Mr. Conklin, and there is no doubt that we will have him safe in Dillsburg before night. Now you go over and tell Mr. Fortescue about all this, for he has the right to know."

Harold would have liked very much to get a sight of Kate's sweet face, but the doctor said nothing about calling her, so he started down town.

"Has the tide really turned?" he thought, as he walked along.

"What will people say when they know I have done this? If they will only stop their everlasting talk against my poor father, I don't care what they say about me."

He soon had the opportunity to find out what one of his father's creditors had to say, and that was Mr. Fortescue, for with Dick to manage the boat for him, Harold went across the river and was fortunate enough to find the rich man at home.

"Well, well! About time you came!" exclaimed Mr. Fortescue, when he entered the library, into which Harold had been shown by the servant. "You're a pretty fellow! Where have you been?"

"Been, sir!" stammered Harold, blushing. "I—I didn't know

"Didn't know that you had to see me. Well, you didn't have to, but it would have paid you and saved you some worry, no doubt. So you ran away from Risley, did you? You'd better have stayed."

"Perhaps you don't know how I was treated, sir!"

"Yes, I did! I know all about it. The committee called here last night. Do you suppose that business men are to be downed by a mob? Do you think for a moment that my bond is to be rejected and I not kick? You don't know those gentlemen, and you don't know me. The Risley town hall awaits you, Harold Holly. Why don't you go to work?"

Poor Harold!

He almost lost his wits as the old man rattled away.

"Do you mean to say I've got the contract?" he stammered.

"Why, certainly I do. You were the lowest bidder—and the committee have got my bond. They'll stand by you if it takes a regiment of soldiers to keep off the mob! Great heavens! young man, you mustn't be so sensitive; by this time you ought to be pretty well used to being told that you are your father's son."

Harold's eyes flashed.

"And I'm proud of it!" he cried. "I've got something to tell you, Mr. Fortescue—something that will surprise you, and let you understand that my poor father was by no means the cheat and swindler that so many suppose."

Surprised Mr. Fortescue certainly was, when Harold told his story, which was listened to with the closest attention, but the only comment he made was a half audible grunt.

He walked over to his desk and began writing.

Harold who never knew how to take him, watched him in silence until he swung around in his chair.

"I hope you approve of my plan, sir," he then ventured. "You spoke once of my father having swindled you out of twenty thousand dollars. You stand on his books as the creditor for five thousand; as to the rest——"

"Hold on, Harold, you don't know what you are talking about," broke in Mr. Fortescue. "The twenty thousand is an old matter; I've crossed it out long ago. The five thousand is a legitimate debt, and I shall insist that my proportion of the money you have found shall be paid to the party to whom I have assigned the claim."

"It certainly shall be, sir. Then you do approve of my course?"

"Fully! Your stock has gone up a hundred points in my estimation."

"Who is the party you have assigned to, sir? If you will give me his name I will hand it to Dr. Walton, who is going to take charge of this affair."

"Here it is," replied Mr. Fortescue, handing Harold the paper which he had just been writing.

And Harold read as follows:

"I hereby assign my claim against the estate of John Holly for the sum of five thousand dollars to Harold Holly, of Dillsburg. Value received."

Such was the paper; date and signature were attached; Harold turned as red as a poppy; his voice trembled as he handed it back.

"I—I can't accept it, Mr. Fortescue. I really can't!" he murmured.

"Can't—you must!" cried the millionaire, jumping up, snatching away the assignment and jamming it into Harold's coat pocket. "Don't you be a fool, boy! you can't help yourself if I choose to assign. Now get along with you and build the Risley town hall. I'm busy and have no more time to talk."

Harold's steps were light as he hurried back to the boat.

Dick threw up his hat at the good news.

But when they reached Dillsburg they found that the people had something else to think about.

There was a big crowd around the post office when Harold and Dick came up the street.

"Wonder what's the matter?" queried Dick.

They paused, for someone was speaking to the crowd in a loud voice.

"I tell you, gentlemen, we owe it to him to give him our confidence again," the voice shouted. "This playing fast and loose is unworthy of the town! That boy has been made a martyr, but he has shown himself a man! I say, now that the opportunity offers, let us give Harold Holly back his contract, which never should have been taken away from him, and never would have been if I had had my way."

"Oh, Harold!" whispered Dick. "That's Judge Ramsay! Do you hear what he says?"

"Hush!" said Harold. "Let's get away!"

But it was not to be.

Just then the crowd caught sight of him.

"Here he is! Here he is! Here's Harold now!" they cried, and they all turned upon the boy, crowding around him so that he could not escape.

Had the tide turned?

"Three cheers for Judge Ramsey!" they shouted. "Hooray for Harold Holly!"

Give him back the contract, judge! He never robbed the workingman!"

CHAPTER XXI.

STILL TROUBLE COMES.

"Come here, Harold. I want you."

It was Judge Ramsey who called.

Even if Harold had not been disposed to yield, he would have been forced into it, for the crowd closed around him and passed the boy from one to another, until he stood alongside the judge, who seized his hand and shook it warmly.

"We've heard all about it, my boy," cried the judge. "The doctor has published the news all over town, and Mapes has run away. Harold, you're a brick! You've saved the Dillsburg bank, and you have redeemed your father's name."

Harold found himself so confused that he could not utter a word, and indeed Judge Ramsey did not give him the chance.

"Gentlemen of the school committee!" he cried. "We are all present here, let's have a meeting. Those in favor say aye!"

"Aye!" shouted the committee, the crowd which was increasing every moment joining in with a mighty roar.

"I move that the High School committee transfer the building contract to Harold Holly!" cried the judge, "and I move you further, gentlemen, that the contract be awarded without bonds. All those in favor say aye!"

Then there was another roar.

"Contrary minded, no," shouted the judge.

There were a few noes, but they were drowned in a storm of hisses.

"The contract is yours, Harold!" cried the judge, slapping him on the back. "Go ahead and build us our school, for we are sick and tired of all this fooling, and I want to see someone who has got some gumption take hold."

"Speech! Speech!" yelled the crowd, as Harold stood blushing and looking very much confused.

It had to be, but it took all Harold's self-control to steady his voice to speak.

"Fellow townsmen, you have taken me entirely by surprise," he began; "I—I hardly know how to thank you for this display of confidence, and all I can say is that if I take the contract for the High School again I shall try to do what I always did, and that is my best; but I——"

"Hold on, Harold," broke in the judge, "you've got to take it—understand that!"

"You must! You shall!" shouted the crowd.

"But what has become of Mr. Plankman?" Harold broke out. "I don't understand this at all."

"Why, haven't you heard?" said the judge. "Plankman got his payment last night, and he has run away—deserted his family and left all the men unpaid."

The cat was out of the bag at last.

Of this, of course, Harold had heard nothing.

Nor had the Dillsburg people heard of Harold's success at Risley, and when it came to their ears he was congratulated on every hand.

Old friends who had not spoken to him since his father's death, now came crowding around him, full of offers of help and sympathy.

Marvelous was the change which Dr. Walton's announcement had brought about.

The next day Harold started to work on the High School bright and early, and at noon, leaving Murphy in charge, went up to Risley to meet the town hall committee.

He was most cordially received, for the news of the doings in Dillsburg had traveled up the river. It would have been hard to find any one willing to admit that he had belonged to the mob, and before Harold left town he had the contract signed, sealed and delivered, snugly in his pocket.

Next day the drummers for the material men came crowding into town.

This was a surprise to Harold, for he had expected trouble in this direction.

"I'll show myself worthy of all this confidence," resolved the boy, and during the next two weeks he worked with a will, making wonderful headway on the school, and actually getting his excavating for the foundation entirely completed up at Risley.

But it was hard work and kept Harold on the jump.

During all this time nothing was heard of either Mr. Conklin or Duchy Moore.

It was every morning at Dillsburg, and every afternoon at Risley.

One night, when he landed at the wharf on his return to Dillsburg, Harold found himself in trouble again.

Dick, who always went up with him, was just handing up a parcel out of the boat, when a rough hand seized Harold by the collar and jerked him violently around.

Harold dropped the parcel and faced about, to find himself in the clutches of Detective Mulvey and another man.

"Ha, ha, young feller! Just the man we want!" sneered Mulvey. "I s'pose you know the grand jury have indicted you for the bank robbery. My orders are to run you down to Whitmanville and lock you up in jail!"

CHAPTER XXII.

IN JAIL AGAIN.

If a thunderbolt had dropped at Harold Holly's feet, he could not have been more surprised than when Detective Mulvey clapped him on the shoulder and announced his arrest.

Mulvey's partner was with him and also two other men.

Resistance was therefore useless; Harold's protests unheeded. Dick Johnson was roughly pushed aside, and Harold handcuffed and hurried off the wharf.

"Mr. Mulvey, this is an outrage!" cried Harold, indignantly, as they walked him rapidly toward the depot. "By what right do you handcuff me? I'm no murderer! If I ever get the best of this business, somebody will have to pay for this disgrace!"

"There, now, you just shut your head and come along without any fuss," sneered Mulvey. "Do you suppose I am acting without authority? Do you think I don't know what I'm about? Oh, you'll get away from us this time, I don't think!"

Many persons saw them as they went through Water street

to Linden, and by the time they reached the depot there was quite a crowd at their heels.

While they still had two blocks to go the train came thundering in.

Mulvey started Harold on the run, shouting to the people at the station to hold the train.

But the train was not running for Mr. Mulvey's especial benefit that night.

It pulled out before he could make the depot with his prisoner.

There was some "tall talk" by the detectives when they reached the platform.

This did no good, however.

The crowd hooted and jeered.

Somebody started a cheer for Harold Holly.

It appeared that the young contractor was as popular now as he had before been unpopular.

The crowd took up the cry, and cheer after cheer rang out.

Mulvey turned pale as they pressed around them.

"We'd better run him into jail here for the present," he said to his partner. "No other train till midnight. They'll rush us next thing we know."

The rush came even as they spoke.

"Let's rescue Harold, boys!" a voice shouted. Harold thought it was Dick's, but he couldn't be sure.

Now, thoroughly frightened, the detectives drew their revolvers, and fired a few shots over the heads of the crowd.

"Fall back, boys!" shouted Harold. "Don't interfere! If any one of you should be shot through trying to help me, I should never forgive myself! Fall back, fall back!"

Perhaps it was Harold's appeal, perhaps the shots that did it. Certainly the crowd fell away, but still it kept on growing every moment.

By the time the detectives reached the jail half the workmen on the High School were in it.

Many of Dillsburg's first citizens were there, too.

The news of Harold's arrest seemed to have spread all over town.

"By thunder, I don't want a job like this again!" sighed Mulvey, mopping his face. "I thought you were unpopular, young fellow, but blame me if every man, woman and child in Dillsburg don't seem to be your friend."

Harold said but little as they led him to his cell.

It was not a time for talking.

His brain was all in a whirl. Despair had firm hold of him when the handcuffs were removed, and the door locked.

Trouble, trouble, always trouble!

It did seem as though it was to be never ending.

For the next half hour Harold paced his cell, a prey to bitter thoughts.

The shouts of the crowd had died away outside the jail.

It was all over; all his fine plans would be overturned; before morning he would be behind the bars in Whitmanville jail; no doubt false evidence would be trumped up against him; there was no telling where it would end.

"This is more of Mapes' dirty work," thought the boy, and then, strangely enough, just as the thought crossed his mind there was a rattle at the door and in walked the object of his thoughts.

It was Mapes himself.

His arm was in a sling; he turned a cold, sneering eye on the boy as he closed the door behind him.

"What do you want here?" demanded Harold, backing against the wall under the window. "What right——"

"There! There! Hold on now," broke in Mapes, "my right is the right of might, Harold Holly. I'm going to railroad you to Sing Sing just as sure as the sun is going to rise tomorrow, unless you agree to what I ask. You hear me? You know I'm a man of my word!"

CHAPTER XXIII.

HOW HAROLD SERVED HIS ENEMY.

Once the jail doors closed on Harold Holly the crowd began to disperse.

But not to their homes by any means.

It seemed as though something impelled everyone to go up to the post-office square, and before long the open space was pretty well packed with people.

Everybody was talking about the arrest, and asking each other what it all meant.

Dick Johnson stood near the post-office door, explaining the situation to Judge Ramsey, who, attracted by the noise, had come down from his office when Murphy elbowed his way to where they stood.

"What's this I hear, Dick?" demanded the foreman, excitedly. "They tell me Harold has been arrested again."

"That's what it is, Murphy," replied Dick. "It's outrageous the way they handled him. As I was telling you, judge, those fellows put the handcuffs on, and——"

"Handcuffs! Handcuffs, it it?" cried Murphy. "Sure it's a burning shame, so it is! D'ye hear that, byes? The boss was handcuffed by thim detectives! Are we going to stand it? I say no! Oh, the dirty rascals! Let's go for the jail and bring the boss out! Who'll follow me?"

Evidently Murphy had been drinking. He shouted out his appeal in a voice of thunder, and the crowd cheered wildly.

"Let's have him out of the jail, boys!" they shouted.

"They've persecuted the boss enough!"

"He should have a fair show even if he is his father's son!"

"Who'll give us work if we let them carry him away?"

Some one after another shouted, and at every shout the crowd cheered.

"Don't do anything rash, my friends!" cried Judge Ramsey. "The law must be respected! You had better disperse."

By this time the crowd was pushing and swaying and everybody talking at once; the noise had become so deafening that the judge's warning could scarcely be heard.

Somebody seemed to be forcing his way to the front.

"It's Conklin. It's Conklin!" someone yelled. "Catch the bank thief! Don't let him get away! He's the cause of all the boss' trouble! Here's the man!"

"Great heavens! Why it is Conklin!" cried the judge, as a strange, wild-eyed figure forced his way to the front.

It was the bank cashier, sure enough.

He was pale and emaciated; his matted hair and unshaven face made his face fairly ghastly; his clothes hung about him in rags.

Paying no heed to the judge, nor anyone else, he ran up the steps of the post-office, turned and faced the crowd.

Now in former days, Mr. Conklin had been a political speaker.

There never was a time when he was not able to hold the attention of a crowd.

"Fellow citizens!" he shouted. "You are surprised to see me, but here I am! I have come among you fearlessly! Jail me if you wish, kill me if it will do you any good, but first listen to me—listen in the interest of one who has been deeply wronged! I allude to Harold Holly—a boy in a thousand! Yes, ten thousand! One who has gone straight ahead, trying to do the right thing in spite of every opposition—in spite of the vile plot worthy of the black-hearted scoundrel who enacted it—Mapes! Mapes is his name! Mapes! He is the man who should be jailed; but Harold Holly must go free!"

Mr. Conklin paused, and then, as the crowd listened breathlessly, in clear, ringing tones he went on to explain.

"For years I robbed the Dillsburg Bank of small sums, fellow citizens," the cashier went on to say, "but I did not

benefit by the stealing; the money was handed over to Mapes, and the books doctored to suit, and so it went on until at last he came to me with a plan to ruin Harold Holly and drive him out of Dillsburg, in order that his father's money, when found, might be stolen from the boy."

Again the cashier paused, and then went on to tell of his own defalcation in a most impressive manner.

"And I did it for Mapes, and because he threatened me with exposure," he added; "but I was resolved he should not benefit by it, and he did not. I ran away, taking the money with me, and never gave him a red cent; but my conscience pricked me, and I returned. You all know what happened then, or if you don't you ought to. Through Harold Holly the bank money was recovered! I take no credit to myself for its restoration. I have been mad—drink and bad company have been my ruin, and Mapes is at the bottom of Harold Holly's arrest to-night!"

"Suppose Mapes had found the money Harold's father buried, fellow citizens? To-night that money is in Dr. Walton's hands ready to be divided among Mr. Holly's creditors, but if Mr. Mapes had succeeded in getting away with it, Dillsburg would never have seen him again. He would not be here as he is now—in the jail at this very moment working up his schemes of revenge against an honest boy! Shall we stand this, fellow citizens? I say no! Arrest me—jail me! I deserve it; but set Harold Holly free and hang Mapes to the nearest lamp post! He deserves that! Yes! He's a thief! He's a blackmailer! He's a fiend! To the jail—to the jail!"

No such wild language had ever been heard in Dillsburg before.

It is doubtful if half of those who heard it fully understood the cashier's rambling words.

It was the fire of his address that aroused the workmen.

They saw operations on the High School and the Risley town hall brought to a standstill! They saw trouble ahead for themselves if Harold Holly was taken to Whitmanville a prisoner.

So they took up the cry, and shouted:

"To the jail!"

"Heavens! This means riot!" gasped Judge Ramsey. "Conklin, come down off those steps and behave yourself! You've made trouble enough in this town. Seize that man, somebody. Call Captain Crane. Put him under arrest! His testimony alone can save Harold Holly. He must not be allowed to get away."

Then the judge made a rush to put his order into execution.

But he did not succeed.

With a wild maniacal laugh the cashier jumped down from the top step right into the midst of the crowd.

"Follow me, boys!" he shouted. "We'll rescue Harold Holly! To the jail! To the jail!"

Then the crowd became a howling mob, and went rushing down Vine street toward Dillsburg jail.

CHAPTER XXIV.

CONCLUSION.

"Harold, I've got the big end of the stick now. It's no use for you to try to escape me. Do as I tell you and the indictment against you shall be quashed, refuse, you will be in Sing Sing inside of a week."

Entirely unconscious of what was going on up at the Post-Office Square, Mr. Mapes thus addressed poor Harold in the jail.

"Well, what is it you wish?" replied Harold, eying the storekeeper steadily. "Why don't you speak out and come to the point, instead of beating about the bush?"

"Harold, I hate you—I suppose you know that?"

"I can imagine it."

"You see my arm? That's your work. You have played a bold game, and just now you are ahead, but I can down you! It is my testimony that caused the Grand Jury to indict you. I can and will swear that you were in with Conklin in the bank robbery, and——"

"You lie!"

"Don't you say that to me! Look out for yourself, Mapes!"

Then Harold, with his eyes blazing, made a rush for his tormentor.

It would have gone hard with Mapes if he had caught him, but the storekeeper, who had held the door partly open while speaking, now slid through it, barring it on the outside.

"No use," he whispered to Detective Mulvey, who was waiting in the corridor. "He declares he has given the money up."

"Told you so," said Mulvey. "You'd better make yourself scarce. There's going to be trouble—don't you hear?"

It would have been strange if Mapes had not heard.

The ominous sounds heard through the cell window had now grown louder—they were close at hand—every instant was bringing them nearer the jail.

Followed by Mulvey, Mapes hurried to the office. The jailer met them with a face as white as death.

"It's a mob!" he gasped. "They're calling out about you, Mapes. Conklin is leading them and Duchy Moore is there, too—heavens! Here they are! I might have known when I let you in here that it would come to this."

Already the mob were thundering at the door.

"We want the boss!" they shouted. "We want Harold Holly, and we will have him! Open the door! We want old Mapes! Bring him out! Lynch him! Open the door!"

For heaven's sake get us out of here some other way!" gasped Mapes. "I was a fool to come here at all!"

The words were hardly spoken when the door came tumbling in with a crash.

It was now too late to escape!

Mapes and Mulvey were caught in the jail yard, trying to make their exit through the rear gate by the aid of a key which would not work.

Conklin, wild-eyed and raving, led the crowd which captured them.

On their way back through the jail, they ran into a big mob of workmen, headed by Dick Johnson, coming out of Harold's cell.

Harold was with them; they were hurrying him along the corridor with triumphant shouts.

A moment more, and they were all in the open space before the jail.

"Bring him out, bring him out! Lynch old Mapes!" yelled Conklin.

Matters were getting very serious.

Someone had a rope—someone else threw one end around Mapes' neck—someone threw the other end over the cross piece of the lamp-post which stood before the jail.

"String him up!" they shouted. "He's the cause of all the trouble! Lynch him! Lynch him now!"

"No!"

Pulling away from those who surrounded him, Harold shouted a single word, rushed forward, and seized the rope.

"Don't do it, boys," he cried. "Don't bring this disgrace on Dillsburg. This man is my worst enemy, but this is the way I would serve him."

With a quick hand Harold untied the rope and threw it clear of Mapes' neck.

"Let him go, boys!" he added. "He's done his worst. Don't kill a crippled man; let him be ever so big a scoundrel! Let him go! He can do no more harm now."

What the end might have been it is hard to say, but

just then Captain Crane, the constable, came charging around the corner at the head of some thirty or forty of Dillsburg's best citizens.

"Get out of this, you!" shouted the constable. "Get out before I read the riot act!" and he began laying about him with his long night stick.

The crowd fell back, but they took Harold with him.

All in an instant their mood changed.

Duchy Moore and three others seized the boy, and raising him on their shoulders, started a cheer in which everybody joined.

It was: "Hooray for the boss!"

And so, while Mapes and Mulvey slunk away, Harold was borne in triumph to Post-Office Square, where he was forced to make a speech to the crowd, and a self-constituted guard stood around the house until daylight determined that, law or no law, no one should interfere with the boss.

But no one tried it then or thereafter, for that night brought Harold's troubles to an end.

Mr. Conklin, taken in hand by Judge Ramsey, made a full confession.

Mapes, captured at the station while trying to board the midnight train for New York, was arrested and taken over to Whitmanville, the judge and Doctor Walton going with him.

When they returned, the indictment against Harold had been quashed, and one against the storekeeper found in its stead.

Days lengthened into weeks and weeks into months.

Harold finished the High School in fine shape, and at length the Risley town hall was done and accepted by the committee.

Meanwhile, Mapes had been convicted of conspiracy. He went to Sing Sing on the same train with the unfortunate Mr. Conklin. Each received a year's sentence, which they duly served to its end.

When it was over, Mr. Conklin returned to Dillsburg with the drink all out of his shattered system and a thoroughly changed man.

He found Harold flourishing.

Work had come to the young contractor from all sides.

And yet Harold had time to lend a helping hand to the penitent man.

He made Mr. Conklin his bookkeeper, and a very faithful and efficient one he proved as time went on.

He is with Harold still.

So is Dick Johnson, now foreman and general right hand man.

So is Kate Walton.

Harold has become rich enough to take a wife, for business still flourishes in spite of hard times.

Up at Dillsburg people will tell you that there is only one man who can build a house.

His name is Harold Holly.

His father was a builder before him.

He is his His Father's Son.

THE END.

Read "THE ISLAND IN THE AIR; OR, THE CAST-AWAYS OF THE PACIFIC," by Cap't Thos. H. Wilson, which will be the next number (623) of "Pluck and Luck."

SPECIAL NOTICE. All back numbers of this weekly except the following are in print: 1 to 5, 7, 8, 10 to 25, 27, 29 to 36, 38 to 40, 42, 43, 48 to 51, 53 to 55, 57, 58, 60, 62, 64, 66 to 69, 71, 72, 75, 81, 84 to 86, 88, 89, 92 to 94, 99, 100, 102, 105, 107, 109, 110, 116, 119, 124 to 126, 132, 140, 163, 166, 171, 179 to 181, 212, 216, 247, 257, 265. If you cannot obtain the ones you want from any newsdealer, send the price in money or postage stamps by mail to FRANK TOUSEY, PUBLISHER, 24 UNION SQUARE, New York, and you will receive the copies you order, by return mail.

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THINGS OF INTEREST.

Sound moves at the rate of 743 miles per hour; hawks can fly at the rate of 150 miles per hour; a storm travels at about 40 miles per hour, and light moves at the velocity of 186,000 miles per second.

Many animals possess more than two eyes which do not act together. A leech, for example, has ten eyes on the top of its head which do not work in concert, and a kind of marine worm has two eyes on the head and a row down each side of the body. Some lizards have an extra eye on the top of the head which does not act with the other two. A bee or wasp has two large compound eyes which possibly help each other and are used for near vision, and also three little simple eyes on the top of the head which are employed for seeing things a long way off.

Fixed in all our military and social customs and living at the base of language itself are two facts which solve the riddle and make clear whence and how right-handedness arose. In all tribes and countries since man used implements of offense and defense, the sinistral or cardiac side was protected by the shield, and the sinistral hand was called the shield hand, as the dextral was called the spear hand. Next to fighting and contemporary with it was the need of barter. Now, the fundamental condition of bartering was counting with the low numbers, one to ten. The fingers of the free or dextral hand were, naturally, first used, and all fingers are to-day called digits, as are the fingers themselves, while the basis of our numberings is the decimal or ten-fingered system. The tally-stick, notched or numbered, is the record of the digits held in the air. Every drill and action of the soldier, from Xenophon to West Point, is dextral in every detail. The dominancy of the right eye is shown in firing from the right shoulder and sighting with the right eye.

One of the members of the present Senate was very backward as a boy of 12. There was to be a school exhibition, and his parents were desirous that he show off by reciting a piece. The boy begged that he be excused, but neither the teacher nor his parents would let him off. He was threatened with a whipping and all that, and he used to go out to the barn and try to recite. What ailed him was bashfulness, but there was no escape for him. When the fatal night came the boy was dragged to school, and when it came his turn he was shoved up on to the platform. His recitation was to be the simple

one of "Mary's Little Lamb," but he couldn't start off to save his neck. He stood there blushing and twisting about for two minutes, and then managed to say: "It's something about a sheep that had a little girl, but I want to go home?" And home he went and ran away, and nothing was heard of him for the next ten years. When he finally turned up he was a talker, and before he was 25 he was in the legislature. He is now rated as one of the most brilliant speakers in Congress, and he doesn't like to hear any one say anything about "the sheep and the little girl."

OUR COMIC COLUMN.

Bronson—What did that pretty salesgirl say when you stole a kiss? Johnson—She said: "Will that be all to-day?"

"They say there is a fool in every family. Do you think so?" "Well, I hardly like to say. You see, I'm the only member of the family."

"I'll be ready in a minute," she said to her husband. "You needn't hurry now," he called up some time later, "I find that I shall have to shave again."

The Lady—Please get as pretty a picture as you can. The Photographer—Don't give yourself any worry, madam. When it's touched up, you won't know yourself.

Stranger—Can you tell me the way to the nearest police station? De Lush—No, s'r. But I'll (hic) tell yer. If yo'll wait, long 'nough, a big feller'll come 'long an' take hol' o' my arm. Just follow ush!

Judge—I am led to understand you stole the watch of the doctor who had just written a prescription for you at the free dispensary. What have you to say to this charge? Prisoner—Well, your honor, I found myself in a desperate quandary. His prescription said "a spoonful every hour," and I had no time-piece.

"But, you see, I don't love you," objected the fair young woman. "Then why," demanded the indignant youth, "did you eat a total of sixty pounds of candy at eighty cents a pound, that I bought for you during the last year?" "Because," she answered softly, with a soulful expression on her lovely face, "because I do love candy!"

As the St. Patrick's Day parade turned the corner an electric car came clanging down the street. The gallant captain knew that the proper maneuver under the circumstances was "open order," but not knowing the exact word of command for the occasion, he turned to his followers and shouted in martial tones: "Attintion, min! Here coomes the car-r! Coompany, shplitt!"

"Miss Zackly," says the inquisitive lady to the school teacher, "I have often wondered why you never got married. How does it happen that—" "It doesn't happen," interrupted the teacher, tartly, "because it never happened to happen. I couldn't happen not to be married, could I? If anything happens it has to be a happening, and if a happening does not happen, then it neither may happen to happen nor happen not to happen. I trust this explains matters to you, Mrs. Quizzle, and now I understand why it is that your children happen to be so backward with their studies."

FAIR FLORINELL

By Paul Braddon.

In 18—, Richard Mayworth, of Mayworth Grange, a country gentleman, residing not a hundred miles from Epsom Downs, died very suddenly, and his only living heir, George Mayworth, inherited his fortune and estate.

George was a wild young fellow, and not by any means a favorite with Uncle Richard, who was a miserly old party, with a predilection for theology, and a confirmed atheist.

The old gentleman had frequently avowed his determination to make a will, and cut the hopeful George off with the traditional shilling, with which crotchety old uncles are so often supposed to threaten their improvident heirs expectant.

But after old Richard Mayworth's death, no will could be found; and as a consequence George Mayworth came into possession of the old man's wealth.

I knew George Mayworth as a jolly, sporting young country gentleman, and after he had taken possession of Mayworth Grange—his uncle's country seat—I was invited down from London for the season's shooting.

George knew that I was a detective, of course, and, indeed, it was in that capacity that I made his acquaintance in London.

George Mayworth was at that time a clerk in the importing house of Way, White & Wallis, and he assisted me in detecting a dishonest clerk of theirs.

Our acquaintance continued after that, and I always liked young Mayworth as a jovial associate, although his habits were those of a fast young Londoner who expends his income before it is earned.

There was a merry party at Mayworth Grange, for George Mayworth was the sort of a host to gather a gay company around him; and as a certain Mrs. Petrau, of uncertain age and long-standing widowhood, did the honors as housekeeper, the fair sex was well represented at the Grange by Miss Mabel Mowry, a young heiress, Mrs. Matraw, her aunt, and the Berton sisters, a couple of charming girls from Kensington.

Dick Lamb, the artist, Frank Ryan, of the London Scorchers, and several theatrical gentlemen, and a sensational novelist, with myself, formed the male portion of the company.

Miss Mabel Mowry, the heiress, was the belle of the Grange, and although all the gentlemen except myself were more than half in love with her, George Mayworth seemed to have the inside track.

I had not been at the Grange many days when it was whispered about among the guests that George Mayworth was engaged.

One day we were all invited to a fox-hunt, and among the gay party of ladies and gentlemen from all the countryside there was one haughty and stately girl who impressed me strangely at first sight.

I was presented to this young lady, whose name was Florinell Fordyce—"Fair Florinell, the dashing huntress," she was called, for she was very fond of the chase, seldom missed a fox-hunt, and being the most dashing and daring horsewoman in the county, she was always in at the death.

Toney Tavis, a good-natured young fellow, seeing my interest in the dashing huntress, volunteered to say, as we rode at an easy canter across the downs:

"Yes; Miss Florinell is a beauty and a riddle at the same time. You see, she was for a long time before his death old Richard Mayworth's secretary. Since old Richard Mayworth's death, although she could not have had more than a couple of hundred pounds at the time he died, supposing she had saved all she possibly could from her salary, she has bought and

paid for a neat place worth eight thousand pounds, and she has a pair of fine horses in the stable beside the hunter she rides to-day."

Several times, as we rode homeward, I detected Miss Florinell regarding George Mayworth with a look full of menace, but her glances were swift and covert.

Before the party separated I had come to the conclusion that there was indeed a mystery about Fair Florinell, and one which in some way concerned my host, George Mayworth.

I reflected, and I thought perhaps she disliked George because he inherited the old man's fortune, which it might be she had plotted to obtain possession of.

It soon became evident to me that she regarded me with aversion, which, if I was not much mistaken, seemed very much like fear.

One mild October morning I started out in my hunting costume, and with my gun on my shoulder. I had gained the woods beside the road, and the bird dog was crouching at my feet, waiting for the word to start him on the hunt, when suddenly the animal started and uttered a quick bark. At the same moment the sound of a pistol shot and a woman's scream reached my ears.

I heard the sound of horse's hoofs, and the next moment a riderless steed dashed by me at headlong speed, and evidently wild with fright.

Rounding a bend in the road I came in sight of Fair Florinell. The dashing huntress was reclining upon a moss-grown bank by the roadside.

At that moment as I was approaching the young lady, I heard the sound of wheels, and the village surgeon, Dr. Amboy, drove up.

As the physician reached her, Florinell started up to a sitting position, but she uttered a stifled groan as she did so, and kept her right hand concealed in the folds of her dress.

"What has occurred?" asked the doctor.

"I was thrown from my horse and injured my hand," she replied.

"Let me see it," said I, and despite an evident wish to prevent its exposure, I impulsively caught her right hand in both of my own, while the doctor looked down upon it.

"Good Heavens, what is the meaning of this?" the physician exclaimed, as he saw her hand. "You have been shot. That wound in your hand, young lady, was made by a pistol ball!"

"I think a chance or accidental shot from some hunter in the woods struck me."

With this explanation we were forced to be content, although we knew very well she was keeping something back, and that sportsmen did not hunt with pistols as a general thing.

When good Dr. Amboy had finished his ministrations, and, like a good Samaritan, had departed on his way, I offered my arm and begged leave to escort the dashing huntress to her home, which was in sight beyond the meadow below the wood.

"Thank you. I will accept your arm, for I have something of the greatest importance to say to you. The occurrence of this morning has decided me, and I will keep the secret no longer. It is in your professional capacity as a detective that I now address you, and I have a strange story to tell—a startling revelation to make," said Miss Florinell.

"I am ready to hear it, and if I can serve you in any way I will do so," I said.

"Thank you," she replied; and then, as we slowly crossed the meadow, arm in arm, she said:

"Before I was employed by the late Richard Mayworth I resided in London, where I met and fell in love with George Mayworth, who promised to make me his wife. It was at his instigation that I accepted the situation of secretary to his uncle Richard. I did not know what his plot really was at

that time, for he said he wanted me to win the good will of his uncle, so that when I became his wife, although I was a poor girl, old Richard would not be angry at our union. This was not George Mayworth's real plan. That was not all the object he had in inducing me to become a member of his uncle's household. No—no, George Mayworth meant to tempt me to commit a dreadful crime."

She paused for a moment, and I waited in breathless interest to hear more.

"Time passed on, and I learned that Richard Mayworth meant to disinherit his nephew George, my affianced husband and then George came to me and said: 'When my uncle is dead you shall be my wife,' and he placed a package marked 'Arsenic' in my hand. Yes, George tempted me to poison his uncle. He knew that I would make any sacrifice to become an honorable wife, for I had loved him better than all the world, and I had heard that of late it was whispered that Mabel Mowry, the heiress, was to become his bride."

Again she paused, but presently she resumed:

"I threw the poison from me, and I said I would have no hand in a murder.

"Then George flew into a terrible passion, and vowed I should never be his wife, and that he would do the work himself. He struck me down at his feet. His cruel blow deprived me of consciousness.

"When I regained my senses he was gone, but the servants told me he had entered the room in which his uncle, who was ailing then, was sleeping. I rushed into Richard Mayworth's apartment, and I saw that a glass of wine which I had left standing beside his bed had been drained, and the old gentleman told me he had drank it, that it had been placed to his lips by George.

"George took his gun and left the house before I recovered from his blow, and when he returned his uncle was dead.

"Now I wish you to disinter the body of Richard Mayworth and examine the stomach of the deceased, for I believe that he died of arsenic poisoning, and that you will find the trace of the drug yet remaining. If you do, my evidence, coupled with that of the servants, should convict George Mayworth. He has betrayed me, and he means to make Mabel Mowry his wife.

"Yesterday I threatened him with exposure—threatened to tell that I suspected he murdered his uncle, and this morning he attempted to take my life; for he it was who fired the pistol shot which wounded me in the hand, although he intended it for my heart."

Thus she concluded.

I was more than surprised, but it was my duty to investigate this matter, and I promised to do so.

When I left her at her own house, Fair Florinell said:

"If my evidence can accomplish it, George Mayworth shall hang. He shall feel the vengeance of a wronged woman!"

I had the body of Richard Mayworth disinterred, and an analysis of the stomach did reveal a quantity of arsenic.

George Mayworth was arrested by another detective to whom I transferred the case, and brought to trial; but the jury failed to convict him, although there was at the time no doubt in my mind that he was guilty.

Fair Florinell disappeared, and it was said she returned to London.

Although his money cleared him, public sentiment was against George Mayworth, and Miss Mowry refused him. He was ostracized by the county people, and a miserable man, upon whom rested the dark cloud of a terrible suspicion, he fled from his native land, only to die a miserable death a few years later in New Orleans.

On his death-bed he acknowledged his guilt, and left all his fortune to Fair Florinell, as all the reparation he could make her.

Fair Florinell became the wife of Dick Lamb, the artist, and they live happily in May fair Terrace, London. Mayworth Grange was sold, for the very sight of the old place was hateful to the dashing huntress.

A KANSAN'S BURIED TREASURE

A story which smacks of the days of Capt. Kidd and his hidden pirate hoards of fiction has come to light in this country, following the discovery of \$21,000 in currency by the heirs of Perry Rice, one of the old time residents of this city, who died recently. The heirs are continuing the search in the belief that only a portion of the old man's wealth has been uncovered, and before it ends the home place will be turned upside down.

Some of the money already uncovered was in the yard, more of it in the cellar and a roll containing \$5,000 was found in an old mattress just before it was consigned to the flames. Mrs. Ross, one of his daughters, was searching for hidden treasure in the cellar and found a buried can which contained \$15,000. This money was all in gold and the search was taken up with renewed vigor and in an old can which was buried in the yard \$5,000 more was found.

Mr. Rice was known in and about this city for his eccentricities, and for years past had had no confidants, living the life of a hermit in the hovel which answered the purpose of a home to him. He owned much city property, including several business buildings and three good farms, from which he derived a considerable revenue, which he refused to deposit in banks.

There was much speculation before his death as to where he kept his wealth, and it was common talk that it was buried about the place. This led to the search which has so handsomely rewarded his heirs. Not a great while ago a force of workmen were excavating for a cement walk and their labors were watched closely by the old man until one of them unearthed a can, filled with glittering gold coins, which he carried away with him to a more secure hiding place.

Stories are in general circulation of mysterious happenings which the neighbors have witnessed about the place for years past and indicate that all of the old miser's hoard of wealth has not yet been located. Often late at night he has been seen busily digging about in his yard and it is believed that he was during these periods secreting his wealth.

Late one night he was seen to go to his well with a lantern on his arm, and it is thought that at least a part of his fortune will be found at the bottom or hidden away behind some loose bit of the stone curbing. As he dropped out of sight in the well the neighbors wondered, but considered that it was one of his eccentricities, and thought but little of it as he reappeared a few moments later.

So the stories go, and before the search for his wealth is discontinued his farm as well as city property will be thoroughly searched. He left no will, though it is thought that his property is worth at least \$50,000, besides the currency which so far has been unearthed.

Organizer of Village Concert (to small farmer, reputed owner of a pianoforte)—Excuse me, Mr. Mangold, but would you be so kind as to lend us your pianoforte for the concert at the schools? Small Farmer—Take it, take it. But mind, I doan't suppose ye'll find all the noates in't, for when my misses wants a bit o' wire she allus goes to the old pianner.

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